

# NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

Devoted to Far West Life

No. 356

JULY 5, 1919

6 CENTS

## BUFFALO BILL'S BLINDFOLD DUEL





YOUNG MAN'S CLUB



# NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY

Devoted To  Far West Life

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., New York. Copyright, 1919, by STREET & SMITH CORPORATION.

Terms to NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY Mail Subscribers.  
Postage free for United States, Island Possessions, Mexico and Shanghai, China.  
Foreign Postage, \$1.00 a year; Canadian Postage 50 cents a year.  
Single Copies or Back Numbers, 6c. Each.  
1 months.....75c. | 6 months.....\$1.50 | 2 copies one year \$5.00  
4 months.....\$1.00 | One year.....3.00 | 1 copy two years 5.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

No. 356.

NEW YORK, July 5, 1919.

Price Six Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S BLINDFOLD DUEL; OR, PAWNEE BILL'S TIMELY SHOT.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE QUEST OF THE SACRED SKULL.

"Colonel Cody to see you, sir."

The orderly saluted, turned smartly on his heel, and left the room, which was the office of a brigadier general, who held a high position in the war department at Washington.

The brigadier threw down his pen, rose from his desk, and advanced eagerly, with outstretched hand, to meet the famous border hero who had rendered signal service to the United States army on many occasions.

"Prompt as ever, Bill!" he exclaimed heartily. "I didn't expect to see you for three or four days."

"When I got your letter saying that you needed my help badly, I came as quickly as horse and locomotive could bring me," replied Buffalo Bill simply. "What is it, Jack?"

The general and the scout had hunted, trapped, and fought side by side out West, before either man grew famous, and so they had become intimate friends.

"There is a very difficult and dangerous mission which the government wishes to have performed," said the brigadier. "It has fallen to my lot to find a man to take it up, and I could think of nobody who had a chance to carry it through successfully except yourself.

"But I am afraid it is beyond even your power, and if you think so, too, do not hesitate to refuse."

"If it is necessary for the good of the country that the work should be done, as I understand from your words, then I will try to do it, let the risk be what it may," declared the border king.

And the brigadier, looking into the fearless, loyal eyes of the scout, knew that this was no boast, but a plain statement of a determination that only death could overcome.

"You may have heard that there have been signs of trouble lately among the Indians in Arizona," said the soldier.

"No, I had not heard," Buffalo Bill replied. "I have been out on the trail in Texas for weeks past, and had no opportunity of hearing any news."

"Well, they are very restive. They have not actually gone on the warpath as yet, but we have good reason to fear that they will do so before long, unless the war fever among them is checked.

"The old men are trying to hold back the young braves, who are hot to fight. But the latter are encouraged by the chief medicine man of the tribe, who is called Snake-in-the-grass, and also by a renegade white man who was drummed out of the United States army for theft some years ago, and joined the Indians."

"Do you want me to shoot or capture these two men?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"It may be well to put them out of harm's way," said the brigadier. "Indeed, you may find it necessary to do so for your own protection. But that is not the special mission I want to offer you.

"As you may know, the tribe attained the climax of its prosperity and power about a hundred years ago under the rule of a chief named Red Bear. By all accounts, he must have been a wonder. The Indian legends assert that he was enormous in stature, nearly twice as tall as



an ordinary man, a perfect Samson in strength, and a remorseless fiend for cruelty.

"But the atrocities he committed, even on members of his own tribe, were, in the opinion of his warriors, more than redeemed by his extraordinary bravery and the genius he displayed as a commander. Never once did he lead his men to anything but complete victory, and other tribes trembled at his name.

"So, when he died, he became the guardian spirit of his people. His skull—as large, tradition says, as a man could encircle with both his arms—is concealed in a secret cave among the hills in the Indians' territory.

"In accordance with ancient custom, his weapons and ornaments were placed there, also, and, together with the skull, they constitute the most valued treasures of the tribe.

"No white American, so far as is known, has ever set eyes upon them.

"A prophecy exists that when the tribe loses the skull or any of the articles connected with it, then its luck will depart, its prosperity vanish, its warriors die of a wasting disease, its old men become foolish, and its children be led into slavery.

"Snake-in-the-grass is the guardian of the skull, and his influence over the Indians largely arises from this fact.

"Now, we believe in the war department, that if the tribe could be robbed of this skull, a war would be averted. They would be so cast down at the idea of the misfortunes coming upon them, according to the superstition, that they would have no heart to tempt fate by going on the warpath. Besides, that troublesome medicine man would certainly lose his power. They might even kill him for failing to guard the skull properly."

"I will go there and get the skull, if it is possible to find it," said Buffalo Bill. "And I will also do my best to put a bullet into that white renegade you told me of."

"His name is Mullins," replied the brigadier. "He is perhaps the worst of the wretches who have allied themselves at various times with the redskins. But I have more to tell you about the skull.

"Since so much importance is attached to it by their superstition, the Indians have naturally devised terrible punishments, both for members of their tribe who tell outsiders about it, and for white men or other Indians who try to find it.

"You will wonder, this being the case, how I came to know about it. When I was a young captain, I was stationed for some years in Arizona, and while there I befriended a young Indian lad named Running Deer, who had been half starved and badly treated in consequence of the death of his parents.

"He eagerly accepted the comfortable home I offered him in exchange for light work as my servant. He worked for me for three years, and seemed to become quite civilized; but when, at the end of that time, his tribe invited him to return, his inborn craving for greater freedom proved too strong to be overcome, even by the offer of higher wages if he would stay.

"Like nearly every native who has had to choose between the two lives, he chose that of his forefathers."

"Blood will tell," commented Buffalo Bill. "Once a redskin, always a redskin. It is right and natural."

"I could never afterward persuade him to desert his people," the brigadier went on, "but he was always grate-

ful for the kindness I had shown him. He would accompany me on expeditions where native experience was needed, and, while doing so, he told me at various times the story of Red Bear's skull. But he would not tell me where it was hidden.

"Running Deer had lost some of his native superstitions through mixing with Americans, but he thoroughly believed in the power of the skull.

"One day, while hunting in the hills, I discovered an immense cave, the entrance to which was screened by brushwood.

"Running Deer was with me, and, after much difficulty, I persuaded him to assist me in exploring the cave, as I felt sure, from his previous admissions, that it was the place where the skull was hidden.

"Unfortunately, however, we had only penetrated a short distance when the Indian showed such abject terror, and prophesied so many dangers from evil spirits and bottomless chasms, that I was forced unwillingly to retrace my steps, meaning to return another day without him.

"Soon after we got back to our camp, Running Deer disappeared. I only saw him once again.

"Our journey into the cave had been conducted with the greatest secrecy, and neither of us had the faintest suspicion that we had been observed. Yet such must have been the case, for I soon had convincing proof that the vengeance of his tribe had fallen upon my poor friend and servant.

"As I was smoking my pipe by the camp fire on the following evening, a tall figure suddenly emerged from the gloom cast by a clump of bushes near by. It was Running Deer.

"For a few seconds he paused, motionless, his fine eyes scanning the neighboring bushes as if he feared an enemy would spring out of them. His nostrils quivered with suppressed emotion.

"Then, when he had apparently satisfied himself that we were alone, he turned swiftly to me, and, extending his left hand, gave me a small parcel wrapped in deerskin.

"Mechanically I opened it, and started back in horror when out fell a human hand covered with blood.

"Running Deer cried, in a low but distinct voice:

"Behold! Flee, O white man! Return no more hither, or worse will befall thee!"

"Then he sprang away from me, elevating above his head, so that it could be plainly seen, the bandaged stump of his right wrist, from which the hand he had given me had recently been severed.

"While an exclamation of horror was still upon my lips, the bushes parted, and he vanished among them. I never saw him again.

"I took his advice and promptly departed from the neighborhood. Soon afterward I was ordered away on duty up North, and never since then have I had the opportunity to go to Arizona and try to penetrate into the cave and find the skull of Red Bear.

"Neither, to tell you the truth, have I had much inclination to do so. The sight of Running Deer's severed hand cooled my desire to pry into the secrets of the Indians.

"But now, as I have told you, there is a strong motive for getting the skull. I wish I could go with you to search for it; but business of great importance keeps me here in Washington.

"I'm reluctant to send you on this mission, Buffalo Bill,"



the brigadier concluded, looking sadly at his friend, "for I fear that I am sending you to your death."

"That is nothing when compared with the risk of an Indian war, in which many women and children, as well as men, would suffer," replied the brave scout.

"I need hardly tell a man who knows Indians as well as you do that death by torture will be the doom of any white man found within the portals of the secret cave," said the brigadier. "For Heaven's sake, don't run any unnecessary risks, old friend!"

"I will not," the border king answered, "but I go on this mission with a double purpose. It will be a feud to the death between the renegade, Mullins, and myself. A white man who turns redskin and tries to stir up war ought not to be allowed to live."

The soldier gave Buffalo Bill the best directions he could for finding the cave, and drew for him a rough map showing its location. But the information was necessarily indefinite, for he had only his memory to depend upon, and several years had elapsed since he had seen the cave.

"Shall you take Pawnee Bill and Nick Wharton with you?" the brigadier asked, as Buffalo Bill rose to go.

"No. I don't want to lead them into danger unnecessarily, and this is a game which can best be played lone-handed."

"Where are they now?" the soldier asked, with apparent carelessness.

"In Texas. I left Pawnee Bill at Fort San Antonio, and I believe Wharton is at El Paso."

Ten minutes later the border king took his leave and started on his long journey to Arizona.

The brigadier opened a drawer in his desk and took out a dried, shrunken human hand. It was the one Running Deer had given him that night by the camp fire.

He gazed at it steadily for a moment, and then shuddered and put it back in the drawer.

"Brave old Bill!" he muttered to himself. "The peril is too great! He must have help at hand, whether he wants it or not."

He sat at his desk and wrote two long code telegrams.

One was to the commandant of a military post in Arizona, directing him to be in the vicinity with a strong force of mounted men, in readiness to help Buffalo Bill if he should get away from the cave and be pursued by the Indians.

The other was to the commandant at Fort San Antonio, informing him of Cody's mission, and asking him to let Pawnee Bill and Wharton know of it, so that they might coöperate in whatever way they thought best.

"Tell them they had better let Buffalo Bill play his lone hand," the telegram concluded, "but be on the spot ready to help him if the need arises."

## CHAPTER II.

### BUFFALO BILL'S WOMAN ALLY.

Three weeks after his interview with the brigadier at Washington, Buffalo Bill pulled up his horse at the door of a settler's cabin on a hill trail in Arizona. He wanted a drink of water and also as much information helpful to him in his mission as he could manage to pick up.

There was nobody in sight except a matronly woman. As she handed him the water, Buffalo Bill asked her:

"Are you a widow, living alone here?"

"Yes; I'm a sort of a widow," she replied. "But I

don't live alone. I'm a woman with five strappin' sons to take keer of her."

"But they all happen to be at work just now?" said Buffalo Bill.

"Yes; sorter that way. My son Tom has dun gone over to the co'ners to see the critters who traded mewls with him last week and didn't say nuthin' 'bout his mewl bein' blind in one eye. If he trades back thar won't be any fussin'."

"My son Joe, he's gone down to the bend to look fur a wild cat that was heard yellin' last night. If that yere cat jes' lays down and dies, it'll be all right."

"Yes, and what about the others?" asked the border king.

"Waal, there's my son Jim, he's down to the village, ten miles off, lookin' fur one of the Johnson boys who wants to run him a foot race for ten dollars. If Jim beats him, I'm to hev a new kaliker dress; if young Johnson beats, I reckon they'll hev to dig lead outer him."

"My son Dick got up airy and went up the mountain arter co'n. It's co'n he won at a shootin' match, and mebbe the other feller won't let go. Dick took his shotgun along."

"My son Abe has gone down to the river arter fish. If he has luck he'll be mighty good-natured, but if he don't he'll likely pick a fuss with one of the Harpers. That accounts fur the hull of 'em."

"Then it's a sort of holiday with the men folks?"

"Yes, sorter, but nuthin' to brag on. They are gwine to take a real holiday next week."

"Picnic or camp meeting?"

"Sorter that way, sah. The five of 'em ar' gwine over to hev it out with the five Robertsons befo' takin' holt of the fall work, and it'll be a sorter picnic, camp meetin', 'Leckshun Day, Fo'th of July, and shootin' match all rolled into one, with funerals to foller."

"If yo' meet any of my folks up the road, yo'd better dodge inter the bushes and lay clus, fur this is about the hour when they gits cantankerous and wanter peel the bark off'n somebody."

"I guess I can look after myself, mother," said Buffalo Bill, laughing heartily.

"Waal, an' who may you be who's so mighty sure o' that, sah?" asked the woman.

"My name is William F. Cody, madam," replied the famous scout.

His name and fame had penetrated even to that remote place, and the woman looked at him with sudden respect.

"I guess you kin, sah," she said. "What brought you down into this section? Was it this yer Injun racket we've been hearin' so much about?"

"Yes, but I don't want it known. My mission is a secret one," replied the border king. "Can you keep the secret and help me?"

The woman eagerly replied in the affirmative. Like all her sex, she had been immediately captivated by Buffalo Bill's handsome face, dashing appearance, and courteous address. The knight of the plains could always rely upon a woman to help him.

The scout briefly explained the nature of his mission. As he did so, the good woman's jaw dropped and she looked at him in amazement and terror.

"It's death, certain death, to ye!" she cried, wringing her hands.

"Oh, no—not at all!" said the border king reassuringly.



"I've taken longer chances and came through all right. But tell me, do you not live in a very exposed position here? You are on the border of the Indian country, and would be among the first to suffer in the event of an Indian rising."

The woman nodded.

"We've dun got ready to tote out at a moment's notice fur weeks past," she said.

"How are the Indians now?" he asked.

"Quiet—too durned quiet by half! It's a bad sign. They say the young braves hev been practicin' the war dance, an' th' ole men hev hard work to keep 'em from raidin' us. It's only a question o' time, I reckon. War is bound to come."

The woman made this statement in a plain, matter-of-fact way, as if it was a question in which she had no personal concern. She showed not the slightest trace of fear for herself, although she knew full well that she stood a good chance of being scalped or taken prisoner and tortured to death at the stake. Like most Western women, she was second to none of the sterner sex in point of courage and resolution.

Looking at her, Buffalo Bill registered a silent vow that he would dare any peril to save her and hundreds like her from the horrors of an Indian uprising.

"How far are you from the village of the Indians—the village where Snake-in-the-grass is the medicine man?" he asked.

"'Bout thirty-five miles, I kalklate," the woman answered. "Ours is the nearest house to them. White folks is purty thinly scattered around this yer section."

"Well, I want to make this place my headquarters while I am carrying out my mission," said Buffalo Bill.

"I am going to search among the hills until I find that cave, and I will come here every few days for provisions and information. I don't want to have to shoot for my dinner while I am in the Indian country. The report of a rifle might bring them upon me, and I don't wish to be seen, even though they are still at peace with the whites."

The woman promised readily to help him in any way she could, and, after thanking her, the border king rode on his way.

He congratulated himself on having established a convenient depot for supplies, but he little knew that he had found a woman ally who would stand between him and death in his moment of direst need.

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN THE CAVE OF THE SKULL.

Day after day, Buffalo Bill sought high and low among the range of hills for the cave in which the skull of Red Bear lay hidden; but at the end of a week he was still as far from finding it as ever.

The directions and map given to him by the brigadier before he left Washington were of little help. They showed him in what section of the hills the cave was located, but, even when that was known, the search for a small entrance masked by brushwood was much like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay.

On the seventh day of his search, Buffalo Bill turned off from a mule track in the hills and rode into the scrub-clad interior.

He had given up his systematic search, and decided to ride around at random and trust to luck to guide him.

He passed along razorlike hilltops, intersected with wa-

tercourses, and in some spots, where the ground shelved away, with waterfalls and steep precipices. It was a wild countryside, and, from its nature, one in which the experienced scout thought a mammoth cave might well be found.

At last the foam-crested waters of a big mountain stream appeared in sight, glimmering in the sunshine through dense foliage.

The brigadier had said that the cave was near such a stream, and Buffalo Bill's heart beat high with hope that the end of his quest might be near at hand.

But the country was too densely wooded and rugged to make it possible to ride any farther. The border king, therefore, tethered his mustang to a fallen tree in a grassy and secluded dell, and advanced on foot.

He had not gone far before he discovered that his only possible guide was the sound of the running stream, for the wood speedily grew almost as dark as night, the dense foliage shutting out the sunlight.

An odor of decaying vegetation filled the air. Damp with the unevaporated moisture of years, it had at first an almost choking effect on Buffalo Bill, used as he was to the sunshine and the fresh air of the plains. The temperature was like that of a hothouse, and among such favorable conditions the undergrowth had naturally become forced and rank.

Parasitical growths flourished luxuriantly; every rotting tree trunk and lower branch was mantled with delicate ferns; and the trees, almost to their topmost branches, were festooned with many-colored growths.

The darkness of this dense wood was illumined only by a ghastly green glow that filtered down through the dense foliage overhead. The silence was broken only by the ripple of the stream.

It was an uncanny place, and most men would have passed through it with a feeling of profound uneasiness, if not of actual terror. But it took a great deal more than a gloomy wood to shake the iron nerves of the border king. He advanced rapidly, glancing from side to side, alert to detect the first sign of a cave, however carefully its entrance might be masked.

Suddenly, as he was gathering himself for a jump over a rather wide watercourse, his gaze was riveted by a sight which held him spellbound for a moment.

From the gloom of some balsam trees higher up the slope he was ascending, there gleamed two of the most horribly bright eyes it had ever been his fate to look upon!

So diabolically menacing was their expression that for a moment Buffalo Bill was too fascinated to move.

No other feature of the face was visible—only those terrible eyes!

Before the border king could recover from his astonishment, they vanished, as if in the twinkling of an eyelid; and the leaves by which the spot was surrounded were undistinguishable from millions of others round about.

Buffalo Bill sprang across the watercourse, and, crashing through the dense vegetation, ran up the slope to the spot from which the baleful eyes had glared upon him.

He searched the undergrowth in the immediate vicinity with the greatest care, but the ground was hard and stony, and, therefore, not likely to receive footprints, especially from the light tread of an Indian's moccasin.

"It's strange!" muttered Buffalo Bill to himself. "I could swear those eyes were human. They did not be-



long to any beast which I am acquainted. Was the whole affair an hallucination? No, it cannot have been. It was too real for that.

"An Indian must have seen me. Well, all the more reason for pushing on and trying to find the cave before he brings the whole pack of them down on me. It's no good trying to catch him in this thick wood. It would take up too much time, anyway."

So reasoning, the border king pushed on his way. Two hundred yards farther on, he emerged into a barren gully. The brigadier had told him that the cave opened off from such a place, and that a stream of water issued from its mouth—an underground creek which ran through the mammoth cave.

As Buffalo Bill recollected this, he carefully explored the gully, and presently noticed, on his right hand, a swift but small stream gushing apparently from fern-clad rocks about eighteen inches from the ground.

Though he knew that the opening to the cave was cleverly concealed, the foliage looked so dense and natural that for some seconds he hardly dared to hope the great discovery had been made.

Until he actually thrust his way through the leaves, the hole over which they closed seemed too small to be the entrance to a passage of any great extent.

But the living curtain parted easily, and, as he passed through it, the shadowy dimness of a vast cave was revealed.

The cave was alive with the sound of slowly falling water, reaching seemingly for miles. The air seemed freezingly cold after the sunshiny warmth of the outside world, but it was good enough to breathe, though heavy and damp.

Buffalo Bill lighted a candle, and saw that the roof and sides of the cave were covered with yellowish stalactites. The passage by which he had entered soon increased in height and broadened out, until the feeble light of his candle failed to reach the other side, and he was compelled, for fear of losing his way, to keep closely to the left wall, which had been the one nearest to him on entering.

Presently a small cross cavern brought the border king to an abrupt halt, undecided which path to take. A faint draft, which had gradually been growing more noticeable, and to which the atmosphere no doubt owed its comparative freshness, did not issue from this side cave, for the air within its limits was still and warm.

While he was standing there, hesitating which path to pursue, Buffalo Bill's eye suddenly fell upon the footprint of a naked human foot. It was impressed in a patch of soft sand, and pointed in the direction of the smaller cavern.

To his relief, Buffalo Bill found, a few feet away, another imprint pointing in the opposite direction. The man had not only gone into the cave, but had returned from it.

Here was an immediate solution of the border king's difficulty. It was obvious that the chances were a thousand to one that the native who had made those footprints had been to visit the place where Red Bear's skull and the other sacred relics were deposited.

Before proceeding on his way into the cavern, the scout took the precaution of tying a reel of thread, with which he had come provided, to a projection in the rocky wall, in such a manner that it could not be observed except by an expectant searcher.

Though the floor was uneven and strewn with fallen fragments, it was much drier than that which Buffalo Bill had been traversing, and he consequently lost less time in picking his steps. But this very fact brought on an apparently trivial accident which placed him in terrible danger at a later period of his adventure.

While turning a corner, he slipped on a smooth stone, and fell backward into a solitary pool of water. His clothes were soaked, but luckily the candle he carried in his hand was not extinguished.

As his gun seemed to have escaped with a trifling splashing, he did not trouble to replace the cartridges; neither, by one of those oversights to which even the most careful of men are sometimes liable, did he examine those which he carried in his belt.

Not far from the scene of this mishap, the glistening sides of the passage shelved away into the darkness of another and a greater cavern.

Buffalo Bill felt convinced, by some inward premonition, that he had at last reached the grim chamber of the dead.

This feeling was confirmed, a moment later, when his foot kicked against a hollow-sounding object and sent it rolling away.

Directing the light of the candle toward the ground, he saw that this object was a human skull.

Glancing downward, his eyes rested upon the bones of a complete skeleton, covered here and there with fragments of rotten matting in which it had once been enveloped.

To obviate, as far as possible, the danger of becoming lost in his wanderings, Buffalo Bill had tied the end of the thread close to the passage entrance, so that as he receded from the wall the reel could be gradually unwound, thus enabling him to return at any time without difficulty.

The light of the candle gave him little help in exploring the cavern. Its gleams shone only a few yards around him, and revealed nothing by which he could distinguish one part of the cave from another.

Littering the ground, in whatever direction he turned, were many bundles of matting, through whose occasional vents their gruesome contents were visible.

Like the first bundle the scout had seen after his foot kicked against the skull, they were all skeletons.

Evidently the cavern had been for many generations the sepulcher of the tribe over which Red Bear once ruled.

After he had spent some time looking around fruitlessly, Buffalo Bill came to the conclusion that he could only hope to find the relics by making a more systematic search.

He sat down on the ground, pieced together what little knowledge he had gained, and thought out the situation. Suddenly the thought struck him that the skeletons had been arranged in a rough circle whose circumference he had penetrated so far only at varying tangents.

Might not Red Bear's skull form the center of the circle? It was highly probable. Nay, on reflection, it seemed absolutely certain, in the light of his knowledge of Indian burial customs.

Working on this theory, Buffalo Bill had some idea of his position, as only a few minutes before he had passed beyond what seemed to be the opposite limit of the scattered dead.

Filled with renewed hope, he hastened in the direction where he guessed the sacred relics lay. So nearly did



his calculations prove to be correct, that in a few minutes the light of his candle fell upon a conical pile built of evenly shaped blocks of stone.

On the top of the pile was a covering of bead-worked cloths, all of them fresh and new—sure proof that the shrine was constantly tended. And on these cloths rested the gigantic skull of Red Bear, surrounded by the weapons and ornaments he had used in his lifetime.

Buffalo Bill had at last reached his long-sought goal.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A FIGHT FOR LIFE.

The border king took up the skull and examined it carefully. It was almost twice as large as that of an ordinary man, and must have belonged to a warrior of a gigantic stature recorded by tradition to Red Bear.

A string of bear's teeth, painted red, was hung around the forehead. There was no doubt that the skull was the one for which he had come in search.

Buffalo Bill, conquering his natural disgust at handling this gruesome relic of mortality, strung a cord through the skull and hung it over his shoulder. He determined that he would not part with it while life remained in his body, for upon his possession of it rested the prevention of a war that might cause untold suffering to the whites along the border of the Indian country.

As he stood there, gazing upon the weapons that had once been wielded in Red Bear's sinewy hands, he suddenly heard a piercing war whoop in the darkness. It was answered by many others, and then he heard footsteps crashing toward him through the loose stones and rotting wood that littered the floor of the cavern.

It was evident that the Indians were approaching. It all happened so unexpectedly that Buffalo Bill had no time to formulate any plan of escape.

All he could do was to promptly blow out the light, and then, through the darkness, quietly make his way toward the entrance of the passage by which he had come.

He would have been unable to find the path, for the cavern was as black as night, had he not been able to feel his way by the thread which he had so thoughtfully dropped for that purpose.

The border king had not proceeded far before he found that his danger was far greater than he had supposed, for he heard the murmur of distant voices along the passage. There were several Indians there, ahead of him, and his retreat by that way was completely cut off.

The position of the scout now seemed hopeless. These redskins ahead were not the ones whose angry cries had warned him, for there suddenly appeared, in the cavern itself, a number of distinct but rapidly nearing lights, against which several figures were momentarily visible.

One feeble chance remained—to gain the second entrance of whose existence Buffalo Bill was thus for the first time made aware. But this chance was small, indeed, in view of his ignorance of the lay of the cavern.

In the darkness, nevertheless, rested his only hope, and he was aided by the knowledge of his pursuers' superstitious fears in that gloomy chamber of death. He figured that these fears would prevent them from separating from one another to any great extent.

The border king resolved that only as a last resource would he make use of his rifle; because, once his exact position was determined, his doom would be sealed. The

Indians would not even need to close in and run the risk of fighting him. They could withdraw and guard the exits of the cavern, ready to shoot him down the moment he tried to escape from one of those exits. In these circumstances, days might elapse before the end came, but it would be none the less certain.

It had surely never been the lot of man to witness a stranger or more savage scene than fell upon the eyes of Buffalo Bill when the Indians, twelve in number, halted indecisively not more than a hundred yards from him.

Their flaring torches showed up their tall headdresses and frightfully painted bodies, and the light shone upon the steel of their tomahawks and rifles, and revealed in dreadful distinctness the white skeletons littering the floor. It was a picture of indelible horror.

"Ugh! the light is gone. The white man has escaped, or he has fallen a prey to the devils of this place," said one of the Indians, speaking in a scared tone of voice.

"Fool! you are wrong; he is here," answered another. He spoke in a voice of peculiar power and ferocity.

Buffalo Bill instantly thought that it was such a voice as might well accompany the terrible eyes which he had seen staring at him as he came through the wood.

As he looked at the speaker, he saw that he was dressed in the costume of a medicine man, and he knew at once that the speaker was none other than the terrible Snake-in-the-grass.

Guided only by the sense of touch, and in peril of stumbling into some unknown pitfall, the king of scouts made his way toward the second entrance. But the torchlight had made the distance deceptive, and he soon learned, only too painfully, how great was the size of the cavern. The gloom was confusing, and it was only by constantly glancing behind him that he could be certain that he had not several times turned and retraced his steps.

His foes evidently imagined him to be in the passage by which he had entered, but it would not be long before they discovered that he had dodged away from it.

As he sought anxiously for the other exit, a vengeful cry smote upon his ears and told him that they had discovered his plan.

The torches, dancing like fireflies, became ominously large, and drew nearer and nearer. Buffalo Bill began to fear that he had by some means passed the entrance, although he had touched the rocky wall as he passed round the cavern.

Suddenly he felt in his face the chill of a draft, and next moment, instead of the jagged rock, his hand touched space.

At this moment his foot slipped, and he lost his balance and fell face foremost on the rocky floor, with such force that he was half stunned. His fall dislodged two or three big stones and sent them rolling. The noise echoed loudly through the vaulted cavern, and the loud yells of the Indians plainly showed that they had at last located his exact position.

A deathly silence followed. The torches were for a few seconds motionless, as if the Indians were taking hasty counsel together; and then they quivered again as the chase was resumed in more deadly earnest than ever.

Groping hastily in the quarter from which the draft came, Buffalo Bill's hands almost immediately touched the right wall of the passage. Guided by it, and by the current of air, he was soon able to increase his pace to a slow run. Luckily the path was level and fairly straight,



so that his desperate flight was for some distance unhindered by any accident.

All hostile sounds presently died away, but Buffalo Bill knew that his enemies had either altered their tactics, and were creeping on him silently, or else other passages existed along which they were passing, with the hope of intercepting him before he reached the entrance.

He knew full well that there was little hope of finally eluding his pursuers without a fight, but the horror of the cave had settled upon his mind so strongly that he determined, at all costs, to gain the outside world by following the draft to its source.

He felt sure that the passage led into the great main cave, from which he could easily gain his way to the open.

The chilly breeze increased in strength so noticeably that he knew he was almost at the turning into the larger cavern, when suddenly he saw a narrow gleam of flickering light pass swiftly across the damp floor in front of him.

He leaped back instantly, bringing his rifle into position. As he did so, Snake-in-the-grass, holding a torch in his hand, stepped out from the shelter of the projecting wall, only three or four yards away.

Before the Indian's hand could lift his feathered tomahawk, Buffalo Bill pulled the trigger of his rifle at point-blank range.

The hammer fell with a snap. The rifle was useless, for the cartridges had been thoroughly soaked when the scout fell into the pool some time before.

Without wasting an instant in useless regrets, the border king clubbed his rifle and sprang at his adversary. He aimed a blow at his head, and brought the butt end down with all his terrible strength. But Snake-in-the-grass, sinuous as any serpent, dodged, and the blow fell upon the shoulder of one of his companions, who had sprung forward just as the weapon descended.

The brave, his shoulder broken, fell to the ground with a sharp cry of pain. Many voices were raised in a loud hubbub, and many Indians immediately rushed forward into the torchlight, as Buffalo Bill dashed onward and ran in the direction offering the freest course.

But he had not escaped unhurt. In the *mêlée* a tomahawk had struck him a glancing blow on the neck and shoulder, causing him to feel dizzy and sick from loss of blood, and to grow ever weaker and weaker as he ran.

He could make no defense worthy of the name, for he felt the cartridges in his belt and knew that they were all soaking wet.

Many times, in his reckless flight, he dashed against the rocky sides of the passage, cutting his face and hands, but the pain of these injuries was lost in the greater pain from the tomahawk wound that was driving him slowly into insensibility.

Stumbling and swaying at every footstep, unconscious of the blood trickling down his face, Buffalo Bill ran on until at last he fell over a rock and was flung heavily to the ground.

He must have lain there unconscious for a few moments. When he awoke, he found himself lying prone on the ground, with his hands resting over space. His providential fall had arrested him at the brink of a chasm.

In front of him yawned a terrible precipice. Behind were his enemies, remorseless and sure of their prey. He could already distinctly hear their approach. Certain of

capturing him, and afraid of being surprised and shot down, they had followed him with caution, and consequently at a much slower rate of speed than his own.

When the torches lit up the path, the shining walls covered with stalactites, and the yawning gulf beneath, Buffalo Bill felt that at last the moment of death had come. He searched vainly around for some means of escape, but could see none, and then drew back into the deepest shadow and nerved himself for a last desperate struggle.

The Indians halted near the brink of the precipice, and the scout, hidden in the darkness, could see that they clustered nervously together and cast frightened glances around.

Snake-in-the-grass, with angry words and fiery gestures, tried to induce them to scatter and search for their quarry; but they plainly had no intention of leaving one another and daring the superstitious terrors of the cave alone.

But it only needed one glance into the baleful eyes of the medicine man to read his firm intention to find and kill his foe.

Buffalo Bill waited anxiously, without any terror, for the moment when he should draw close enough, and then, clutched tightly in his grasp, fall with him over the precipice into the gulf of death.

But the medicine man did not see him. He searched up and down along the brink of the chasm, and then paused some twenty feet away from Buffalo Bill.

As he turned and raised his torch above his head, his eyes rested for the first time on the crouching figure of the scout, and they became fixed in a wide-open stare—not of savage delight, as Buffalo Bill had anticipated, but of utter dread and horror.

Snake-in-the-grass took his foe either for his own ghost or for the demon who was supposed to haunt the cave. It was not an unnatural mistake, for, after all he had passed through, Buffalo Bill must have looked dreadful and almost inhuman in the weird glow of the torchlight.

A wild cry broke from the lips of the medicine man, and he who feared no living thing stood for a moment framed against the darkness—a picture of most abject terror.

Then, as Buffalo Bill looked at him, his face turned ashen gray beneath its copper hue, he staggered on the brink of the precipice, lost his balance, and, grasping wildly at the air, fell backward into its spirit-haunted depths.

The torches behind him danced excitedly to and fro. There was a confused yell of fear and horror, a scamper of feet, and then utter darkness. The Indians had fled, imagining that all the devils of the cave were at their heels.

Buffalo Bill tried to drag himself to his feet, but the pain of his wound and the loss of blood were too much for him. He reeled backward and lost consciousness.

## CHAPTER V.

### PURSUED BY INDIANS.

Many hours passed before the border king opened his eyes and recollected, in a confused way, the startling events through which he had passed, and realized that he had escaped from what had seemed to be certain death.

That he was still alive was doubtless owing to the superstitious Indians' conviction that the dreaded demons



who were supposed to haunt the spot had been the cause of their leader's death.

Every bone and muscle in the scout's body ached, but presently he was able, with much difficulty, to drag himself from the ground and stand upright.

Guided by the underground stream which he had noticed on first entering the cavern, he managed to find his way out into the sacred valley, and then to the spot where he had tethered his horse.

He was still dazed by his wound, but the flow of blood had stopped. His magnificent constitution asserted itself, and, after bathing his fevered head in the stream beside which he had seen the baleful eyes of Snake-in-the-grass, he began to feel fit for fight again.

Throughout all the desperate adventures he had encountered, he had kept the sacred skull slung securely around his neck. As he mounted his pony to ride out of the Indian country, he congratulated himself that his mission had been successfully performed.

Performed? Not quite. The thought struck him, a moment later, that, although Snake-in-the-grass had gone to his death, Mullins, the white renegade, still dwelt among the Indians and was liable to create trouble until he received his quietus.

"I will place the skull in safe-keeping with the widow who has so many ferocious sons," said Buffalo Bill to himself, "and then I will hang around the district until I get a chance to settle accounts with that cur Mullins.

"It is a death feud between us. I cannot decently go back to the brigadier without accounting for him."

After emerging from the wood, Buffalo Bill made a bee line, as nearly as he could, for the house of the widow woman.

He had ridden about ten miles, and was rounding a corner on a hill trail, when he suddenly ran full tilt into a large party of Indians, who were squatting around a camp fire on the other side of the bend in the trail.

With the Indians, as Buffalo Bill saw at a glance as his mustang bucked and reared from a brave it had almost trodden under foot, was a white man.

The latter was dressed and painted after the fashion of the Indians, but his race was nevertheless apparent to the trained eye of the scout.

The Indians shrank back, aghast for the moment at the sudden apparition of horse and rider. Some of them were the men who had been in the cave and witnessed the death of Snake-in-the-grass. They had met a hunting party, in which was the renegade, Mullins; and they were at that moment relating the story of their terrifying experience with as much excitement as their stoical natures were capable of.

But Mullins did not share their superstitious fears. The moment he saw the border king, he leaped to his feet, with a frightful oath, drew his revolver, and fired point-blank.

The bullet tore a hole through the shoulder of Buffalo Bill's coat, slightly grazing the skin; but did no more serious damage.

The king of the scouts had not a single cartridge fit for service. They were all still damp from their immersion in the pool in the cave.

He did not waste a moment trying his useless fire-arms. Before the crack of Mullins' six-shooter had died away, he flung his rifle straight at the renegade's head.

The aim was true. The heavy breech caught the man's

forehead, gashing it terribly. He staggered and reeled like a drunken man, fired his revolver a second time wildly in the air, and then fell to the ground.

Buffalo Bill galloped his mustang over the renegade's prostrate body, and then, before the Indians could recover from their spellbound, superstitious wonder, he fled for his life.

But the redskins were men long used to the hazards and surprises of war and the chase. It took them only a few moments to recover from their terrified amazement, and to realize that they had a living foe, and not a ghost, to contend with.

They sent a scattering volley after their fleeing enemy, and Buffalo Bill knew, by the sudden plunging and quivering of his steed, that one of the bullets had found its mark.

Glancing around, he saw that the mustang had been wounded in the flank and was bleeding freely. But the gallant animal, in perfect sympathy with its rider, did not falter in its long, swinging stride. It would keep on while there was an ounce of strength or a breath of life in its body.

After discharging their rifles, the Indians ran to their horses, mounted them hastily, and gave chase to the fugitive.

It was a bright moonlight night, and, as Buffalo Bill left the hills and galloped over the prairie in the direction of the widow's cabin, he could be plainly seen by his pursuers. But their horses had been tethered, and so he was able to gain a fair start of them before they settled down to the chase.

It was not the first time, by many, that the border king had ridden for his life before a party of redskins. Ordinarily he had little to fear on such occasions, for he always had under him one of the best horses to be found in the West, and he was a magnificent rider and a dead shot.

But now he was heavily handicapped. His wound still throbbed most painfully; he was weakened by loss of blood and the severe strain he had undergone. His horse was also wounded and had been ridden far, while the Indians' animals had been resting, and were comparatively fresh.

Nevertheless, he managed to keep well ahead during nearly an hour's hard riding. Now and again, the leading Indians fired their rifles at him, but they were out of range, and could not draw near enough to make their aim effective.

At last, Buffalo Bill saw, far ahead, the light of the widow's cabin. It glimmered across the prairie, inviting him to a haven of safety.

He knew full well that the woman's sturdy sons would help him to drive off his pursuers, and that he would be able to obtain at the cabin the rest, food, and attention to his wound of which he stood so sorely in need.

But he also knew that by riding toward the cabin and seeking refuge there he would draw down on the widow and her sons the vengeance of the Indians. And it was likely that that vengeance might be swift and terrible.

His horse was fast weakening from loss of blood and was slackening its pace. To gain the cabin and obtain help to beat off the Indians was his only hope of safety, but the chivalrous knight of the plains scorned to save himself at the expense of others—and one of those others a woman.

When he was about half a mile from the cabin, he



swerved his horse with the intention of passing by it far to the left and drawing the Indians after him.

In the bright moonlight, the redskins could plainly see that his horse was failing, and that they were gaining upon him rapidly. They uttered shrill yells of triumph, and urged their ponies to greater speed.

Buffalo Bill's mustang made a supreme effort, but exhausted nature was too much for it. With a groan, it sank in a heap to the ground and died, after a few convulsive struggles.

Now, indeed, was Buffalo Bill in desperate straits. The Indians galloped toward him, yelling more loudly than ever, and he had not a single cartridge fit for service. Even his rifle, which he might have used as a club, had been flung away when he felled the renegade, Mullins, to the ground by the camp fire.

But help came in his moment of sorest need. The yells of the Indians had been heard in the log cabin by the widow and her sons.

Hastily throwing open the door, they had seen the scout fly past, a quarter of a mile away.

"Quick, boys!" cried the woman. "It's Buffalo Bill, with the Injuns after him. Guess we'll save his scalp yet, if ye look lively."

The men snatched up their guns and advanced toward the Indians at the double, firing rapidly as they ran.

Their mother, in spite of her years, was not far behind them. Rifle in hand, she spurred them on; and more than one Indian tumbled from his saddle to her unerring aim.

The redskins were dumfounded by this sudden interposition between them and their prey, and the rescuers reached the border king before they could recover from their surprise and make an effective attack.

"Back to the house, now!" cried the woman, as she saw them gathering for the onslaught. "Glad to see ye back, colonel!" she added, to Buffalo Bill. "Hurry, or the Injuns'll get ye yet."

The boys spread themselves out to cover the retreat of the border king and their mother, but the former had no notion of being protected.

"Give me a revolver, and I'll help you," he cried to the nearest man.

A weapon was handed to him, and in a shorter space of time than the telling takes he had shot down two of the leading Indians as they charged toward him.

This again stopped the advance of the band for a moment, and the little party were able to gain the cabin and bar the door just as several of the braves dashed up, uttering their blood-curdling war whoops.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SIEGE AND A RESCUE.

The redskins tried to enter the cabin by direct assault at first. They battered at the door, and two or three tried to gain entrance through the narrow windows.

But the house, like nearly all dwellings on the borders of an Indian country, had been built with the idea that it might some day have to stand such an assault.

The door was made of stout logs, strengthened by heavy bars that dropped into position inside; the windows were small; and well-placed loopholes commanded every point of vantage.

A few well-aimed shots by the defenders soon did execution among the assailants and cooled their ardor. They

hastily mounted their horses and fled out of rifle range, leaving several dead braves on the ground, while others were so badly wounded that they could hardly keep their saddles.

The defenders had leisure in which to review the position and size up their chances.

Buffalo Bill was in a sad state. Half of what he had passed through would have caused the death of most men; and it had had its effect even upon his iron frame.

His face and body were covered with blood—his own and that of his horse; he was pale even to the lips, and so weak that he could hardly stand upright on his feet; but his unconquerable spirit still shone forth through his fiery eyes.

There was plenty of fight left in him yet, as several of the redskins had lately discovered to their cost.

"Madam, I am eternally your debtor," said the knight of the plains, bowing with his inimitable grace and courtesy to the widow. "But for you and your brave sons the Indians would surely have had my scalp; and—what would have been far more serious—they would have recovered their sacred skull. Yet I deeply regret that I have brought danger upon you. I had hoped to draw them away from this place, but unfortunately my poor horse gave out."

"Danger!" echoed the woman scornfully. "Why, ye don't think we keer for a small passel o' redskins like these, do ye, colonel? I kinder 'spicion ye war puttin' up an insult on us, tryin' to ride away like that. Ye might ha' known we'd have been 'tarnation glad to help ye. Didn't I promise ye that?"

Buffalo Bill apologized, saying that he had had no intention of slighting her promise, and then addressed himself to the question of how the cabin could be defended if the redskins settled down to make a regular siege.

"I reckon thar's grub enough fur a week or more," said one of the boys, in reply to his question, "and, as fur water, thar's a well just outside and a barrellful in the next room. We've got plenty o' kertridges fur the guns."

"What's the roof made of?" asked Buffalo Bill. "Can they set fire to it with blazing arrows?"

"It's dry thatch, boss," replied the woman. "I told my son Jim time an' again that he oughter take it down and put on a covering of green bark or hides instead, but I guess he war too durned lazy. Now, we're goin' ter pay fur it."

Jim hung his head sheepishly and hastened to turn the conversation from his own negligence to a less personal topic.

"Did ye notice that brave who turned his horse an' galloped away soon as we made the attack?" he asked. "His face was all smashed up and covered with blood, but somehow I sorter suspicioned he war a white man fixed up as an Injun. I fired at him an' missed, an' then he made tracks jest as slick as he knowed how. Thet warden't like an Injun, either."

"He must have been the renegade, Mullins," said Buffalo Bill, and he told his friends the story of that scoundrel.

"I will get him yet," he concluded. "It must be a feud to the death between us. When he is gone, the Indians are far more likely to remain at peace."

"I don't think they will make any very determined attack upon us now, or go on the warpath after all. The loss of the skull, which they think means the loss of luck



to their tribe, will have taken the fighting spirit out of them.

"They chased me because they thought they saw a good chance of getting it back, and they will still try to take this cabin for the same reason. But if we put up a good resistance, they will soon tire of the business and resign themselves to the belief that their bad luck has already commenced."

"I guess that's right, boss," said one of the boys, "an', anyhow, we stand a purty fair chance of bein' relieved in short order. Yesterday I saw a troop o' hoss soldiers, guided by a couple of scouts, prowlin' about the base o' the hills not two hours' ride away from here. I spoke to 'em, an' they said they was lookin' fur you."

Buffalo Bill questioned the man closely as to the appearance of the scouts, and satisfied himself that they were Pawnee Bill and old Nick Wharton. The latter's identity was easily established by the description of his mare, Diana—"a miserable-lookin' bag o' bones, but an all-fixed wonder to go."

The border king saw at once that his friend, the brigadier, had, with the best intentions in the world, played him false by sending help to him instead of leaving him to play a lone-handed game, as he had desired.

But the game had already been played out in the silent gloom of the cavern. And, as his hand touched the gigantic skull which was still slung over his shoulder, Buffalo Bill felt that he was already entitled to claim a complete victory.

The touch of the skull reminded him that, at all costs, it must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the Indians again.

He whispered to the woman, and she immediately brought him an ax and a shovel. With these tools he pried up two of the floor boards and dug a deep hole in the bare earth beneath.

Then he called the young men around him, pointed to the skull, and said:

"Swear upon this that you will never reveal where it is hidden. I ask you to do so because it is possible one or more of you may be captured by the Indians and put to the torture to make you reveal its hiding place. War or peace depends on their not finding it. If only I myself were concerned, I would take your word; but the lives of many women and children hang upon this matter. Therefore, swear."

Awed by his grave words and solemn aspect, as much as by the grim token of mortality he held toward them, the young men readily took the oath.

The skull was then buried, the earth carefully replaced so that it would not appear to have been disturbed, and the floor boards put back in their places.

All this time the moon had shone brightly over the prairie, and it had been impossible for the Indians to approach within rifle range of the log house without making targets of themselves. But now Buffalo Bill noticed, with some concern, that the sky was becoming overcast with clouds, behind which the moon would soon be hidden.

He directed the boys to keep a sharp lookout on all sides of the house, and soon the need for vigilance was made plain.

Taking advantage of the darkness when the moon passed behind a dense bank of clouds, the Indians crept toward the log cabin in a circle. They evidently thought they were unperceived, but the sharp eyes of the king

of scouts detected them as soon as they began to make a move.

"Hold your fire, boys, until they come within close range, and then let them have it," he whispered.

His advice was taken, and when the Indians were within about fifty yards of the house spurts of flame darted out through the loopholes, and half a dozen of the redskins were stretched upon the ground, dead or wounded.

With a howl of rage and pain, the survivors, wounded and unwounded, again beat a hasty retreat to work out other plans for the capture of the little fort.

Pretty soon they began to creep toward the cabin again on their stomachs, hidden in the long grass, and to fire lighted arrows at the roof, precisely as Buffalo Bill had feared.

At first the arrows fell short, for the Indians were afraid to approach too closely, so deadly had been the execution done among them by the rifles of the white men. But by degrees they gained courage, and, presently, several blazing arrows stuck in the thatched roof and set it on fire.

The smell of burning thatch and the smoke immediately apprised the defenders within of their peril.

Jim seized a bucket and filled it with water from the big barrel standing in the kitchen.

"I'm to blame and I'll put it out," he shouted, and in another moment he would have rushed outside to climb upon the roof if Buffalo Bill had not held him back.

"You'll only throw your life away," he said. "I've got another scheme."

Jim looked at him inquiringly.

Buffalo Bill mounted on the table, snatched up the lamp, removed the glass, and held the flame to the inside of the thatched roof, which, with his tall stature, he could easily reach. He carefully burned a big hole clear through the roof from the inside, taking care, by dashing water around the sides of the burning patch, that the conflagration should not become general.

Then he pushed his head and shoulders through the burned-out hole, mounting a chair upon the table for the purpose, and called for buckets of water to be held up to him. He poured these down over the thatch, and in a few moments had extinguished the flames caused by the Indians' fiery missiles.

"Come down, come down" cried the widow, in an agony of fear. "The Indians will pot you, sure."

But, although bullets were beginning to whistle around his head, Buffalo Bill would not desert his post until he had removed all danger.

He called to the boys to soak blankets in the water barrel and pass them up to him. These he spread out over the roof, climbing through the hole for the purpose.

While he was busy with this task, the moon shone out brightly through a rift in the clouds, and he was plainly visible to every one of the attackers.

Their war whoops resounded on every side, and a fusillade of bullets began to strike the roof like hail. But with his usual remarkable luck, the border king was not touched. He completed his task, waved his hand defiantly toward his hidden foes, and then swung himself through the hole in the roof down to the ground.

"I am easy in my mind now," he said to his hostess. "As long as they don't set fire to the place I think we can hold it."

The Indians kept up the siege all night, occasionally



firing a few shots to show that they were on the alert and to keep the defenders from enjoying any rest. Just before daybreak they gathered themselves together for the final and supreme effort.

Leaving two of their number in charge of their horses, they rushed in a body toward the door of the cabin, evidently hoping to break it down by the weight of numbers.

When they were about fifty yards away, a bugle call was heard from the other side of the house, and next moment a troop of United States cavalry came galloping around to the front, led by Major Lillie, better known as Pawnee Bill, and Nick Wharton.

The widow and her sons had been too much occupied with the defense to notice the approach of the soldiers in the dim grayness that preceded daybreak, just as the Indians had been too much occupied with the attack. Buffalo Bill alone had seen them coming, and immediately threw open the door of the cabin and advanced to meet his friends.

The Indians halted, pale-stricken, as the soldiers charged among them, cutting them down with their sabers and shooting them with their revolvers right and left.

The survivors threw down their arms, put their hands above their heads, and begged for quarter.

The major in command of the troops thereupon shouted to his men to desist in their work of slaughter, and the Indians were huddled together in a group as prisoners.

Buffalo Bill was warmly shaking hands with his old friends, Pawnee Bill and Wharton, when the officer in command of the troop walked up to him and saluted.

"Glad to see you alive and well, Colonel Cady," he said. "My instructions from Washington are that I am to take your orders. What shall I do with the prisoners, sir?"

The border king looked at the band of captives, and saw that they numbered over thirty, while half as many again lay around on the ground, dead.

"I think the tribe has had a lesson that will not be forgotten in a hurry," he said. "I doubt whether it would be advisable to take the prisoners to the fort and have them tried. The great object of my mission here is to prevent a serious Indian uprising. And I think that end would best be achieved by letting these men go back to their tribe and tell what has happened to them. But let me speak to them first."

He walked over toward the dejected band of Indians, ordered them to be ranged up in front of him, and then said:

"Listen to my words, O ye sons of foolishness, and give heed that ye profit thereby! Did ye not know that the sacred skull of the great chief, Red Bear, had departed from your keeping?"

"Aye, we knew," said one of the braves, who had been in the cave.

"And knew ye not that Snake-in-the-grass was slain by the magic of the skull in the hands of the white man?"

"Aye, we knew."

"Impious ones, you would fight against the wisdom of the sacred skull! Its magic has departed from your tribe, and rests now with the white man. Go your ways to your tribes and preach the counsels of peace, lest ye be utterly destroyed.

"If ye should fight against the white man, lacking the magical power of the skull, defeat and death will surely follow. Your braves will be cut down like young sap-

lings before the breath of the storm. Your children will die of wasting diseases; your crops will fail, and your old chiefs and counselors will become foolish. But if ye till the land and live in peace, the skull shall work you no harm, and the tribe shall increase and prosper."

This oration had a great effect on the Indians. One by one they passed before the border king and did homage to him in token of their obedience to his orders.

After the terrible losses inflicted upon them mainly through his instrumentality, they recognized in him the great chief of the skull, and trembled lest he should make worse things befall them.

Buffalo Bill presently waved his hand and dismissed them, quite after the fashion of an absolute monarch.

As they mounted their horses, and rode away across the prairie, sadder and wiser men, the officer in command of the troop said to the king of scouts:

"Why didn't you demand that they should give up the white renegade we've heard so much about?"

"Don't worry about him," replied Buffalo Bill. "We'll get him sooner or later. He is the comrade of the Indians, and it would hardly have been decent to play upon their fears to make them surrender him. We may be pretty sure that they will drive him out of the tribe, after these losses they have sustained, and we've only to keep a good lookout in order to run him to earth and settle our accounts with him."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MAJOR AND THE LION.

A few days after the siege of the blockhouse Buffalo Bill, with Nick Wharton, Pawnee Bill, and the soldiers, camped on the hills, intending to establish headquarters from which they could look around the country, police the Indians if necessary, and try to capture the notorious renegade, Mullins.

After they had had lunch, the officer in command of the soldiers expressed his intention of taking a stroll.

"Better take your gun along with you, major," said Buffalo Bill warningly. "There are plenty of mountain lions and bears hereabouts. If you go far from camp you are liable to be held up by one of them."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of them," laughed the officer. "I guess they are pretty tame, anyway."

The officer wandered away from camp a short distance and stretched himself out under a tree for a nap.

He had not slept above a quarter of an hour when he was aroused by what seemed to be the purring of a cat, only the sound was much louder.

He had never heard the purr of a mountain lion, but he realized in an instant that one had come creeping upon him as he slept. He was lying on his left side and facing the west, and the beast had come up behind him.

The officer opened his eyes, but did not move a finger.

The beast's nose touched the man's shoulder and sniffed at his face, and the long whiskers on his muzzle tickled the man's cheek, but he did not move.

Had he raised hand or foot, the beast would have seized him by the neck at once. He had found a dead man, as he believed, and was inclined to investigate.

The lion, as was afterward ascertained, had his lair within a few hundred feet of where the soldier was lying.

After a minute or two a paw was placed upon the officer's shoulder, and he was turned over on the broad



of his back. Opening his eyes to the slightest possible extent, he had caught sight of the paw and then realized that he was in the clutch of an immense mountain lion—one of the largest of his kind.

For a moment the officer rejoiced. A bear or a mountain panther, as he well knew, has not the good nature of a lion, and is also more treacherous. A lion will starve before he will feed on anything that he has not killed with his own paws, while a panther will grab at anything that comes in his way.

Between the two, the choice was with the lion, and the major felt almost elated over his luck.

When the man had been turned on his back, the lion sat up like a dog, and purred like the great cat he was.

The officer had on a leather hunting jacket with silver buttons. They seemed to be objects of curiosity to the beast, and he touched them in succession, and slightly pulled at them with his paw.

The soldier's hat was lying on the grass near his head. The lion reached for it and began to play with it, as you have seen a puppy play with a glove or a rag.

He struck it to the right and then to the left, and then jumped after it and seized it in his teeth and gave it a toss into the air. He played with the hat for at least ten minutes, and then sat up and yawned and returned to his victim.

Presently a spur on the major's right boot heel attracted his attention. It was of brass and quite new, and reflected the rays of the sun filtering down through the foliage. He licked at the metal and hurt his tongue on the rowel.

With a low growl he drew back, and for a minute seemed to cogitate.

Then he began licking and biting the strap, which was also new and full of oil, and in a minute or two he had the spur off the boot.

He then lay down and chewed at the strap as if he liked the taste, but after a time flung it aside and rolled over on his back and worked his body about on the grass, as if bothered by fleas.

The beast was rolling and purring, when one of the horses in camp uttered a neigh.

The major was watching through half-closed lids, and the move the lion made astonished him.

He turned like a flash and bounded six feet into the air, to whirl again and stand head to camp.

For five minutes he stood watching, and sniffing, and growling. His tail was held straight out, his ears were laid back, and one paw was lifted about six inches from the ground, as if ready to strike. Had any of the men from the camp happened to come that way, they would have met with death.

As the neigh was not repeated, the lion finally wheeled round and lay down with his head on his paws, and fastened his eyes on the soldier's face.

There was a long ten minutes, during which the officer seemed to live a month for every minute.

Then the beast slowly rose up, and with a touch of his right paw turned the man over on his face. After sniffing at the head, he ran his nose down the leg clear to the ankle.

One leg of the soldier's trousers had been pulled up, leaving his ankle bare, and the beast gave the flesh a couple of licks with his tongue, that felt like a file.

The taste didn't seem to tickle his palate for some reason, and he returned to his playful mood.

Once, as he pawed at the jacket, a claw caught and ripped it down as a sharp knife would have done.

Once, too, he stood with his paw on the man's hand, but, as his claws were sheathed, the paw felt like a ball of velvet.

The major was rolled over at least a dozen times by the lion, and the beast leaped over him, back and forth, like a dog at play. He seemed to get a good deal of amusement out of it, and to preserve his good nature.

He finally fastened his teeth in the man's hunting belt, and lifted him clear of the ground as easily as a man might lift a kitten.

If the soldier had not been told over and over again that a mountain lion eats only what he kills, he would have felt sure that he was to be carried off. He had a revolver in his belt, and as his right hand fell down it encountered the butt of the weapon.

He might have drawn it and killed the beast, or a shot might have frightened it away, but it was hardly a chance in a hundred.

It may have been that the lion was holding the man up to see if there was life in him, and was hoping to feel him make a movement.

If there had been so much as the stir of a hand, death would have been certain and swift. But, by a supreme effort, the major held himself rigid and did not move a muscle.

After swinging the man in pendulum fashion for a full minute, the beast laid him down as carefully as if he had been a baby, gnawed the belt in two, and pulled it off, and, carrying one end in his mouth, frolicked away and was hidden a moment by the thick brush wood.

After lying still for a quarter of an hour or so, the officer arose cautiously and hastened back to the camp, revolver in hand.

When he told of his thrilling experience, a score of his comrades immediately volunteered to help him hunt down the mountain lion and get revenge for the fright he had suffered.

Buffalo Bill led the party, and soon picked up the beast's trail. In a short time he had tracked it to its lair in the thickest part of the bush.

As the lair was being surrounded by a cordon of men, the hunters could catch momentary glimpses of the lion's yellow hide through the foliage. He was stalking to and fro, lashing himself into a passion as he scented his enemies.

Suddenly he charged out with a terrible growl, and leaped at one of the soldiers who had ventured too near, knocking him down with a single blow of his paw.

But at that moment the rifle of Pawnee Bill cracked. The lion, shot through the heart, bounded high in the air and then fell dead.

The soldier was badly scratched and dazed by his knock-down blow, but was not seriously injured.

"The biggest mountain lion I ever saw," said Buffalo Bill, as he measured the beast. It was eight feet long from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail, and weighed more than a hundred and fifty pounds.

As the officer touched the terrible claws, and looked upon the strong rows of teeth in the lion's bloodstained mouth, he realized how wonderful had been his escape when the beast caught him napping.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TALE OF A RATTLER.

Buffalo Bill hunted up and down the Indian territory for several weeks in company with the soldiers, but not a trace of the renegade could be found.

The Indians said that he had left their tribe immediately after the rescue of the border king at the block-house, and they professed to know nothing of what had become of him since then.

One night, as they sat over the camp fire, Nick Wharton expressed his contempt of the methods of the soldiers to his friends Lillie and Cody.

"By Jiminy Crickets, but I never did see sech a pack o' galumpin' idiots," said he. Old Nick was never a man to mince his words.

"When they are hunting for anybody, they kick up sech a dust and sech a racket that there's no earthly chance of catching him. We might as well go round with a brass band as in this hyar kafoozlin' fashion. Guess we'll never ketch your friend Mullins unless we break loose and look for him by ourselves in our own way."

Buffalo Bill nodded. It was exactly what he had been thinking about.

Next day the three scouts took leave of the officer in command of the troop. Buffalo Bill told him that he might as well take his troop back to the fort, as the Indians were now perfectly peaceful, and the hunt for the renegade could be better prosecuted by a small party than by a large one.

The scouts sought shelter that night at the house of a settler on the border of the Indian country. He was a neighbor of the widow with the numerous sons—that is to say, he lived only twelve miles away from her place, which was very near in that sparsely settled country.

The settler was an old man who had come out West from Pennsylvania, and he was a strong upholder of law and order throughout all the section in which he lived. He was delighted to hear of the suppression of the threatened Indian rising, and was much interested in the hunt after the renegade, Mullins, of whose misdeeds he had often heard.

"I heard to-day that a tough fellow, who has been hanging around Pottsville, the village near here, is to be put on trial to-morrow," he said. "There is nothing specific against him, as I understand, no more than that he is a rascal on general principles, and they are going to run him out of town. It strikes me that he might be your man. It would be worth while riding in to see."

Buffalo Bill jumped at the chance, and declared that he would certainly go.

"I heard a rumor that he had been annoying your friend, Widow Murphy, down yonder," continued the old man, "and her sons took him prisoner and toted him down to the village to be tried by the judge."

This news more than ever determined the border king to be present at the trial, for he guessed that Mullins might have been hanging around the widow's cabin in the hope of recovering the skull and thereby reestablishing his credit with the Indians.

After dinner the guests smoked their pipes on the porch and spun yarns of frontier life with their host and hostess.

"Tell our friends one of your snake stories, Nick," said Buffalo Bill presently.

Nick promptly responded to this appeal with one of the tall yarns already familiar to the readers of these chronicles of Western history.

The old man and his wife laughed uproariously, and then the former said:

"But I've got a better snake story nor that of my own. D'y'e keer to hear it?"

"Certainly," said the scouts, in a chorus, for they guessed from the twinkle in their host's eye that his story would be a good one.

"Me and my old woman was sleeping jest as peaceful as could be, one night last summer," the old man began, "when round about midnight, I should judge, I was awakened by a sound like a running sewing machine.

"'Look here, old woman,' I says, being half awake and my eyes still glued together, 'what you up at this time sewing for? Ain't there enough working hours in the day for you to finish that dress for the camp meetin'?"

"'Eh, what's the matter, Pete—got the nightmare again?' I hears my wife saying, and I wake up all at once and find her sitting up in bed by my side.

"'I thought,' I says—when, with that, there was that whirring sound again.

"'Rattler!' I shouts.

"Now, I've got a bull pup that would rather fight a rattler than chase cats any day. The pup sleeps outside, and I hadn't any thought of seeing him tackle this particular rattler, because the door was shut and locked.

"But I hardly finished shouting 'rattler' when ker-splinters, plunk! in through the southwest window jumps the bull pup and clean out into the center of the floor.

"It was dark as pitch—no moon or stars shining—but from the growls of the pup and the rattle of the snake I knew they were at it, trying for a hold.

"And there me and the old woman was in bed, she scared half to death, and me not knowing what to do.

"I don't know how long the scuffle on the floor kept up, but at last I says:

"'Lucindy, I'm going to get up and help that bull pup. He's stood by me through thick and thin in my battles with snakes in the mountains, and now I'm going to stick to him.'

"With that Lucindy grabs me by the arm.

"'Oh, Pete!' she cries, 'don't do that. What'll I do if I am a widder—and the snake might bite you in the dark?'

"'That's so,' I says; 'where's the matches?'

"'The other side of the room, alongside the lamp on the wall,' she says, 'and the snake's somewhere in between.'

"There I was, not knowing what to do, except that I wanted darned hard to help that bull pup.

"I thought and thought for maybe ten minutes, and had just about made up my mind to jump on the floor and take my chances, when all at once I remembered that the old woman had been down to the village buying things in the afternoon.

"'Lucindy!' I shouts, for she was 'way under the covers, head and all, by this time, 'didn't you buy some stickum stuff to mend that busted china when you was down to the village to-day?'

"'Yes, Pete,' she whispers, just peeking out.

"'Where might it be?' I demands.

"The old woman dives under the covers again. Pretty soon she reaches out a hand to me.

"'Here, Pete—here it is,' she says. 'It cost forty-



eight cents, and it was the last bottle they had, and Mrs. Snickle was after a bottle, too, and she saw me get mine and looked envious like at me and I feared she might stop here on her way home and try to lift it, so as soon as I got here I stuffed it under the edge of the bed. What are you going to do with it, Pete? It cost forty-eight cents,' she says, plaintivelike, 'and it was a bargain.'

"But I was too busy to take stock about bargains and things. I yanked the cork out with my teeth and poured a lot of the stickum in my hands.

"Then I hauled my feet out from under the covers and smeared the stickum over 'em good and thick. Next I smeared some on my hands and arms clean up to my elbows, and then I threw the empty bottle in the direction of the scuffling.

"Now,' I says to the old woman, 'I'm going to get a light.'

"With that, before she had time to grab me, I put my hands on the walls as far up as I could reach. They stuck beautiful.

"Hurry!' I shouted. 'Keep it up, Growler—I'm coming,' and I planted my toes on the walls and they stuck. Then I moved my hands farther up the wall, one at a time, and advanced my feet the same way, the stickum holding like the grip o' death all the time.

"Before I knew it I was up to the ceiling and walking across it, with my back to the floor, as nice as you please. Just as I reached the wall which held the lamp, the old woman sang out:

"Where—where are you, Pete? Oh, I know I'm going to be a widder!"

"No, Lucindy,' says I, 'I'm not going to give you a chance to marry Jim Brown just yet.' And with that I started down the wall headfirst, and next second ran kerplunk into the lamp and knocked off the chimney.

"Oh,' moans the old woman, when the crash comes, 'the rattler's bit him—and I'm a poor, lone widder woman—oh! oh! oh!"

"Then I finds the match box on the off side of the lamp, and I strikes one and lights the lamp.

"Hey, old woman,' I says, clinging to the side of the wall like a fly, and with my head raised up and looking at her, 'I'm not—'

"Oh, Lord!' she moans, taking one look. 'I'm a lone widder woman—there's his spirit going up to be an angel!' And with that she dives under the bedclothes and weeps all to herself.

"I looked around for the bull pup and the rattler, and there they was, right in the center of the floor, fighting like all possessed.

"The reptile's tail was going as fast as lightning, his head shooting out at the dog twice as fast, and the dog dodging just as fast, and all the time trying for the reptile's back at the neck.

"It was the prettiest snake fight I ever saw, and I was about tempted to see it to a finish, when the bull pup gave a whine.

"With that I started to jump to the floor, but, by gosh, I'd been clinging in one place so long that I stuck fast, and when I got loose I left a lot of skin behind and fell to the floor in a heap.

"While I was scrambling to my feet and reaching for a chair, the old woman pops her head out from under the covers and looks over at the lamp.

"His spirit's gone clean up,' she says, 'and I'm a lone widder woman.' Then she starts blubbering again.

"Well, that's about all, except to say that I misjudged that pup's whine. He wasn't weakening at all—had just stuck a splinter in his off hind foot.

"Fact is, he was just getting warmed up, for before I could raise the chair to hit the reptile, he grabbed the rattler by the back, and it was all over before you could say 'Jack Robinson.'

"All over, that is, except the measuring and making the old woman believe I was Pete Dixon instead of his spirit. And both was tough jobs, I tell you, for the snake measured five feet eleven and nine-seventeenth inches, and the old woman was powerful set on being a 'poor, lone widder woman.'

"But, say, that stickum's a great thing, and no man in any snake country ought to be without it handy."

"Nick, it's no good you trying to tell snake stories," said Cody, as soon as he could speak for laughing. "Pete has simply got you skinned to death."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RENEGADE'S DOOM.

"Guess we'd better get a move on bright and early," said the old settler next morning, when he met Buffalo Bill and his friends at breakfast. "Justice don't move with no leaden feet in Arizona, an' unless we get down to the village purty soon, the man may have been strung up or ridden out of town on a rail."

They mounted their horses and rode five miles to Pottsville. When they reached that place, the court had just been convened in the bar of the local saloon by the justice, who happened to be also the saloon keeper, as well as the town marshal, the mayor, the sheriff, and a host of other functionaries.

The room was filled with cowboys and tough characters who hung around the village. In a word, it was just the kind of rough-and-ready tribunal that existed by hundreds out West in the period intervening between the reign of the vigilantes and the establishment of regular law and order.

"This yeg court hevin' been properly opened fur sich bizness as may rightly come before it," said the judge, as he took his seat and smiled blandly upon his audience, "we will purceed to dispose of the case of the Widder Murphy against Tom Sackett. Bring in the pris'ner."

A tough-looking character, dressed like a cowboy, was brought into court, where he glowered angrily around and seemed disposed to fight all and sundry.

Buffalo Bill glanced at him, and then drew from his pocket a photograph of Mullins, which had been given him from the rogues' gallery of the war department by the brigadier.

"Yes, he is the man right enough," the border king whispered to Pawnee Bill. "He must be my quarry, whatever the judge wants to do with him, for I have pledged my word to the brigadier to settle accounts with him."

"Now, you fellows," said the judge, "you all know about this yer man, Sackett. The critter hasn't been with us long, but he has gained quite a reputation by his bull voice and bluffin' ways.

"It has been the general opinyun that he was a dangerous man to fool with, and that opinyun has been shared by all our leading citizens. Now, t'other day this yer ripsnortin' bad man goes up to Widder Murphy's place



an' shoots off that bazoo of his an' does his level best to skeer the good lady into a fit. He says he wants a skull, of all 'tarnal things, and he thinks she'll jest faint away or grovel on the floor at his feet.

"But, does she? Nary a faint! Nary a grovel! She jest steps forward, swings round that big fist of hers, an' knocks him down flat on the ground. Sackett jumps up, to gnash his teeth and roar like a lion. But he finds a gun lookin' at him 'tween the eyes. Holdin' that gun with a hand as steady as a rock, an' speakin' in a voice without a quiver in it, the lady says:

"The man who will try to skeer a woman into fits is a coward and a bluffer. Jest you go down on your knees and beg my pardon."

"The goldurned hobo wants to holler and bluff, but he sees that the woman means bizness. It was a mighty hard pill to swaller, but it was either swaller that or a bullet, and so Sackett mumbled out that he was sorry and hoped to be forgiven, an' he goes down on his knees to give pint to the confeshun.

"An' now, feller citizens, what follered? Did this almighty bluffer, on reaching a safe distance, pull them two guns of his and work up a roar in his throat and come gallopin' back for revenge? Not by a durned sight! He kept goin' on right ahead as fast as he knew how, an' hid in the brush for half a day, an' when night comes he sneaks down to this yer village and hopes nobody will notice him.

"But we'd got onter the game. The Widder Murphy's boys come inter the town an' told us all about it. We had him arrested, an' here he is, to git the full benefit of the legal statoots of this yer glorious colony.

"Now, I guess you boys will agree with me thet the Widder Murphy gave him most of the punishment that was necessary. There only remains for me to give the pris'ner a few plain words of advice.

"He's rather had the bulge on this town for the last two or three days. Thet roarin' voice of his, aided by the sight of his two guns and his red eyes, has brought about a good deal of crawfishin'.

"Thet is at an end now, an', naterally, sich of us as hev crawled backward are thirstin' to get even. I kin hold myself and the crowd about fifteen minits, I reckon, but arter that I won't be responsible.

"If Sackett has got sense he'll git a move on him and git out of our sight within the time prescribed; if he has any idea that any more of his bluff will go, and hangs around to try it on, the chances are that we shall be plantin' a jack-pine tree at the head of his grave before sundown."

"Hold on a moment, judge," said Buffalo Bill, as the prisoner was about to be released. "I have a word to say before you let this man go."

"An' who may you be?" demanded the judge.

"Why, don't you know him? He's Buffalo Bill!" said one of the cowboys standing near by.

At this famous name the crowd instantly became all attention. Everybody instinctively understood that something exoiting was about to happen.

"I have a quarrel with this man, and I want him to fight me before he is driven out of town," said Buffalo Bill, looking Mullins straight in the eyes.

The wretched man quailed before his stern glance, and tried to edge away toward the door of the saloon.

"I ain't got no quarrel with you," he muttered. "I never see you before, Colonel Cody."

Buffalo Bill stepped to his side and whispered sternly:

"Either you fight me fairly, man to man, or I denounce you for a renegade deserter, who joined the Indians and tried to make them go on the warpath. You know you would be strung up inside of five minutes if I did that, and showed your war-department photograph, which is in my pocket. Make your choice, and make it quickly!"

Mullins looked around like a rat in a trap, but at last he said, seeing no way of escape:

"Well, I suppose I shall have to fight you. But 'tain't fair fur an ordinary shot like me to stand up against the famous Buffalo Bill, the greatest marksmen of the West. Why, you can pump lead into any inch of my carcass you like, and you know it. It's fair murder to stand me up against you."

"It is the just execution of a traitor and a scoundrel," replied Buffalo Bill sternly.

"Well, but at least give me a chance for my life," pleaded the wretched man.

The chivalrous nature of the knight of the plains was stirred by this appeal.

"I will do this much for you," he said. "I will agree that we shall both be blindfolded and placed back to back. At the word of fire, we will turn and shoot as best we can. This arrangement will neutralize the advantage which my skill would otherwise give me, but I am none the less sure that God will defend the right."

The judge and the cowboys heartily approved this chivalrous suggestion, and the whole party immediately adjourned outside to witness the strange and novel duel.

The duelists were carefully blindfolded by the judge, who volunteered to give the signal.

Next moment Buffalo Bill and his enemy stood back to back, waiting for the word to turn and fire blindly at one another.

The cowboys watched them, breathless with excitement at this strange duel.

"Fire!"

The renegade's bullet went wild, and whistled within an inch of Nick Wharton's head, but Buffalo Bill's shot went crashing straight to its mark in the forehead of his adversary. With a choking cry, Mullins fell to the ground. The border king tore off his bandage and bent over him, but he had already expired.

"So perish all renegades who forget their race," said Buffalo Bill solemnly.

Three weeks later Colonel Cody entered the office of the brigadier general in Washington, carrying in his hand a large canvas bag. He put the bag on the table, drew from it a gigantic skull, ornamented with a string of bear's teeth, painted red, and placed it upon the brigadier's desk.

"I have to report, sir," he formally announced, "that there is no longer any reason to fear that the Indians in Arizona will give trouble, and also that the deserter, Mullins, may be entered as dead in the records of the war department."

THE END.

With the next issue, out July 12th, the name of this magazine becomes *Western Story Magazine*.

"Buffalo Bill's Mexican Feud; or, Pawnee Bill and the



Diamond Hunt," is the title of the story that will appear in the next issue of this weekly. It tells of one of the most thrilling adventures in the life of the border king, and no one who likes Western stories should miss it. The king of scouts undertakes to track down a band of bloodthirsty Mexican outlaws, who have kidnaped an American girl. In so doing he meets with many adventures and narrow escapes. There will also be an installment of Edward C. Taylor's thrilling serial and feature news from all parts of the world. The number of the next issue will be Vol. 7, No. 1, whole No. 357.

## Ted Strong's Crooked Trail;

OR,

### The Treasure of the Cave.

By EDWARD C. TAYLOR.

(This interesting story began in NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY No. 361. If you have not read the preceding chapters, get the numbers which you have missed from your news dealer. If he cannot supply you with them, the publishers will do so.)

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### A HUMAN MAP.

Harvey Ransdell, the cow-puncher who had forsaken a lucrative medical practice because he loved the freedom and adventure of the West, now entered the room with Bud. He was the doctor again now that he saw a man stretched out needing his help.

He crossed the room with rapid strides, and proceeded to examine the wounded man carefully.

When he finished, he straightened up and shook his head.

"Where did you get this man and how was he hurt?" he asked, turning to Bud.

"Search me," answered Bud. "Ted an' me foun' him out on ther sod hollerin' an' groanin'. He might hev bin throwed by his hoss, fer all I know."

"No, I don't think so," said the doctor-cowboy gravely. "He has been severely beaten. Did he say how it came about?"

"No, all he has been talking about is his brother, whom he insists on calling a map," said Ted.

"Delirious, probably," said the doctor. "I'll see what I can do for him, but if he shows any lucid moments and you want to find out how this happened you better get it out of him quickly, for he is not going to live. From what I can learn, I fear that his skull has been fractured at the base, and if that is so he will most likely pass in his checks."

The doctor got to work and felt the man's head. The man, who had become unconscious, uttered a groan and opened his eyes, in which there was now every sign of intelligence. He looked around inquiringly.

"You are among friends," said the doctor quietly. "Don't be afraid."

The man nodded feebly. The doctor removed his fingers, and the man at once relapsed into unconsciousness again.

"Bad business," said the doctor.

"Seemed all right a minute ago," said Colonel Mulhall.

"So he was," replied Ransdell. "He'll come around all right again for a little while, but he'll die before morning. When he comes to ask him all that you want to know, for now is the time for him to talk, if ever."

"All right, go ahead," said Ted. "How were you hurt?"

"They beat me with their pistols until they thought I was dead, after they had stolen my brother, the map," answered the man feebly.

Ted looked significantly at Ransdell, who nodded to him that the man was all right and knew what he was talking about.

"What is your name and why did they beat you?" Ted asked.

"My name is Francisco Aguilar," said the man. "My brother's name is Estaban. We came from Spain. My brother is the hereditary map that leads to the cave of the fortune of Cabrillo, a follower of Cortez, the great Spanish conqueror."

"The fellow is plumb crazy," exclaimed Colonel Mulhall. "Who ever heard such rot?"

"Don't interrupt him," said the doctor. "He knows what he is talking about, and is perfectly rational."

"Why did they attack you?" continued Ted.

"They wanted the map that would lead them to the great fortune."

"Go on," said Ted encouragingly.

"We met them, my brother and I, this morning, and asked them the way to the mountains. My brother, who likes to boast, told them of the fortune, and showed them the map."

"Did they try to take it away from him?"

"They could not, unless they took him."

"Whose is the fortune, and how did you come to know about it?"

"Away far back, when one of my ancestors was among the first white men in this country with noble Cabrillo, the fortune was hidden in the mountains in the middle country. Cabrillo came through this very country with his men and slaves loaded down with treasure—gold, silver, sacks of gems, the loot of Mexico. The map tells all about it, and where to find it."

"He won't do," said the colonel. "This is one of the wildest pipe dreams I ever heard."

"Let him go on," said Ted. "But how did you come to know about the treasure and its hiding place?" he asked, turning to Aguilar.

"My early ancestor was one of the soldiers of Cortez, a captain in the army of the great conqueror. They came up from Mexico, and found the fabled mountains which the Mexican Indians said were full of gold. When they got to the mountain they were attacked by the Indians, and most of the Spaniards were killed. Only a few escaped with Cabrillo. But before they went away they hid the treasure they were carrying in a cave in the mountain and put a spell upon it to guard it. My ancestor made a careful map of the mountain and the cave, for he was formerly an engineer in the army of Cortez, while with him in Mexico. This he carried with him to Spain, and it has been in our family ever since."

"Put a spell upon the cave!" said Colonel Mulhall. "What kind of a spell?"

"The demons of the mountain guard it, and every man who shall go into it seeking the treasure, save only the descendants of my ancestor, shall never come out again. The secret of the cave I do not know. That, with the map, is handed down to the eldest son, and only he knows it."

"Why have not your people looked for it before, if it is so great and so easy to secure?" asked the colonel suspiciously.

"They were rich and did not need it," replied the Spaniard proudly. "But the war with your country lost them all their estates in Cuba and the Philippines, and my brother and myself, being made very poor, came out to look for it. By the map we have found the way, I translating the marks to him."

"Could he not translate them for himself?"

"Alas, no, he could not see them."

"Is he then blind?"

"No, his sight is good, señor."

"I don't understand you," said Ted impatiently. "He is an intelligent man, according to your story, and can both read and see, why cannot he read the map which is in his possession?"

"Because, señor, it is tattooed upon his back."

Colonel Mulhall tapped his own forehead, and rolled his eyes to heaven to indicate his total distrust of the Spaniard's sanity.

"Tell us about it," said Ted gently.

"When my ancestor found that the map he had prepared was being worn out, he saw that if a better record was not made all means of ever again locating the treasure cave would be lost. So he caused the map of the



trail leading to it be tattooed upon his own back, and before he died he had a copy of it transferred to the back of his oldest son, at the same time imparting to him the secret of the spell put upon the cave for its protection. If the son did not visit the cave to secure the treasure he was in turn to have the map transferred to the back of his son, and so on down the line of descendants, until one should be found adventurous enough to seek it. None except the oldest son should ever know the chief secret, which is the only means by which the cave may be entered in safety."

"Where is this mysterious mountain?"

"That I cannot tell you, señor, with exactness; but it is somewhere in this part of the country. It is described on the map as a very small range, and as we have studied the location for years through books with the aid of the map, we know that it is this side of the great Rocky Mountains."

"You started to tell us how you were assaulted," said Ted.

"My brother and I were journeying by easy stages to the place of the treasure. Yesterday we met a band of young men traveling our way, and they spoke to us and journeyed with us. My brother, who has never traveled much, began to ask them questions touching on the fortune, and they answered him at first as in a joke, making fun of him and bantering him, until at last, goaded to it, he told them the story as I have told it to you, and to prove it he bared his back and let them look at the map."

"And what did they do, then?"

"They were very attentive to my brother, and rode with him, and cooked fine dishes for him when we camped, and made him drink their fiery liquor. When I protested they insulted me. And so it went until to-night, when, seeing the lights in this house, I urged my brother to leave our companions and come here."

"And they would not let you leave them?"

"When I suggested it they turned upon me with curses and began to beat me. When my brother flew to my aid they knocked him down and bound him and carried him off, leaving me for dead."

When he had finished talking the Spaniard was exhausted.

But Ted had one more question for him.

"Did you know the names of your companions of the road?" he asked.

"They did not call themselves as we men do," replied the Spaniard. "They cursed much and addressed one another by vile names, which in my country would be resented with the knife or pistol, but they passed them by as they would a mother's pet name."

"But did they not have names of some sort for one another, or was there not some strange look about any of them by which you would know him again?" persisted Ted.

"Aye, they called one man, who seemed to be their leader, by a name I have never heard. It was Scar-face Dick. And he would be known among men anywhere by his great size, and by the big red gash which has healed, which lies glancing across his mouth."

The doctor warned Ted that the Spaniard could not talk more without a rest, as he was very weak.

"He has talked enough," said Ransdell.

"Do any of you gentlemen recognize the description of the man who tried to kill this man, and who carried off his brother?" asked Ted.

"Know him?" exclaimed Colonel Mulhall. "I should say I did. He is Dick Prior, leader of the celebrated Prior gang of desperadoes."

"Then he is the man I am going after," said Ted, with a snap of his jaws.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A RUINED PLAYER.

During the night the Spaniard died, but the guests at the Mulhall ranch house knew nothing of it until the morning.

But even then those who knew the circumstances of his death said nothing of the strange revelation of the magic cave, and the treasure of Cortez, which could be found only by the aid of the human map.

By the time noon came the cow-punchers had departed their various ways; some by riding across the prairie with a farewell yell and a wave of the hand, to the north or south or west, in whichever direction their home ranches lay.

Only the young roughriders remained, for a hunt, Colonel Mulhall told those who inquired why the boys were not on their way even as they.

"You're taking a long chance when you go after that Prior gang," said Colonel Mulhall, when Ted announced his intention to pursue the men who had stolen the human map.

"What is there so especially dangerous about the Priors?" asked Ted.

"Dick Prior, or Scar-face Dick, as he is called throughout the territory, is one of the worst desperadoes in the West," answered the colonel. "He has put many a bold man under the sod. He is not only a man of great physique and enormous strength, but he is a perfect demon in a fight and fears nothing on earth. He is quarrelsome also, and has killed men out of pure wantonness, just to satisfy a whim."

"Great Scott, what is the matter with you men in the Indian country?" asked Ted. "We up North would not stand for a fellow of that sort, we'd either put him in jail or run him out of the country."

"You don't know Scar-face Dick, that's all, or you wouldn't talk like that," said the colonel. "Wait till you see him. He's a terror."

"I want to see him, and I'm going after him this morning," said Ted, in a tone that expressed finality.

"All right, don't come around here after he has killed you, complaining that I didn't warn you," cried the colonel. "You young roughriders are the most reckless lot of youngsters in the country, and I hope you get that gang. Good-by and good luck."

The boys were mounted and waiting in front of the ranch house for the word to go. At a signal from Ted they turned and galloped off into the south, having made their farewells to the cowgirls of the ranch.

As they were sweeping along over the prairie they saw advancing toward them a remarkable-looking character. It was a thin, dejected-looking man, mounted on a lop-eared donkey. The head of the rider was drooped upon his breast, and on his head was a battered plug hat, while under one arm he carried a bulging and dilapidated umbrella. In one hand he held a lean and well-worn carpet sack.

"Jumpin' sandhills, look at ther comical cuss comin'," said Bud Morgan. "What do yer make it out? 'Pears ter me thet it is one o' them scarecrows what yer see up in ther corn country come ter life."

The boys gave the stranger a wild cowboy yell just to wake him up, and the "scarecrow" raised his head and gave them a look of terror, then wheeled his donkey, and belaboring it with his carpet sack, started away as fast as the beast could amble.

Yelling like a Comanche on the warpath, Bud started after him, and the terrified fellow, with an occasional look over his shoulder, kept on beating his poor beast with both bag and umbrella.

But it only took Bud a minute or two to catch up with him, pass him and turn, stopping in front of him, and blocking the way.

At this the fellow pulled up his donkey and threw his hands into the air with his carpet sack and umbrella dangling over his head.

"Wait a minute, stranger," said Bud. "Whar d'yer come from, an' which way be yer goin'?"

"May kind Heaven forfend me. Now have I again fallen upon evil times," cried the fellow, in tragic tones, and in a deep, sepulchral voice. "I, good fellow, am traveling by the sun into a gentler and a kinder land."

"Yer langwich is some too hisalutin' fer me," said Bud. "Who are yer? Give it ter me straight."

"I, good sir, am a 'Tommer,' who has fallen into evil straits, with me fortune gone and mine honor undone," said the fellow, in a melancholy voice.

"Well, put down yer arms," said Bud, "they might grow thet way, an' then ye'd be inter a turrible fix when yer wanted ter pull on yer boots."

The fellow lowered his arms and sighed deeply.



"Now tell me what's a 'Tommer.' I've heard tell o' most everything exceptin' one o' them."

"A 'Tommer,' fair gossip, is an actor who portrays a character on the stage in the acting version of the ancient and revered composition known as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Aye, marry, 'tis a goodly trade, I wot, this strolling about the country inculcating the great moral lessons taught in this most virtuous play, an' I have gained some renown an' eke some lucre by it."

"I see, yer a actor," said Bud. "Well now, d'ye know I never see a real actor face ter face before. Does it hurt much?"

The "Tommer" drew himself up with a gesture of offended dignity.

"Sir, 'tis a sorry jest," he said. "I am a member of one of the most ancient professions, and it is an honorable though sometimes scarcely profitable calling."

"I stand corrected," said Bud, laughing. "But what's yer name, an' what part d'yer play?"

"My name, sir, is Reginald Plantagant Poindexter, and in the play I portray the character of Marks, the lawyer."

"Oh, I thought may be yer took ther part o' ther bloodhound," said Bud.

"Then could I say right haply that even you would make an excellent good actor as the donkey," said the "Tommer," with spirit.

"Ha-ha, bully fer you!" said Bud; "yer cert'nly landed on ther solar plexus thet time."

"And now, good sir, pray let me pass and be on my way, for I have been milked, and all that the other gang of robbers left me is this emaciated bag and this property umbrella."

"Robbers! Who are you calling robbers?" said Ted, who had ridden up with the other boys.

"Are you not robbers, then, but honest men?" asked the actor, looking at the ring of boys who had surrounded him and were listening with smiles to the exchange of words between him and Bud.

"Of course we are not robbers," exclaimed Ted. "But what about robbers? Have you been held up?"

"Aye, marry, and that I have," said the fellow, "and that no later than this morning, and thereby lost me fortune and find meself robbed and undone, for I have lost me troupe and me properties."

"Tell us, how did it happen?" said Ted.

"Well, kind sirs, I will tell me o'ersad tale," said the "Tommer," in a voice that seemed to come from the ground: "This morn was fair as Poindexter's United Colossal Uncle Tom's Cabin Company left the peaceful vale in which the sleepy village of Wetumka lies, bound for the picnic grounds where the Mystic Order of Modern Grafters were to disport themselves. Through the bounty of the master grafter the troupe was to erect its tent within the grounds and give two performances at ten cents a head. We had been playing in miserable luck, and there was not a groat within the exchequer. I, as manager, expected to win enough lucre to pull us out of the accursed country to where there are no cowboys to shoot out the lights and make sport of our laudable efforts."

"Well, what happened?"

"We left the town early so that we could erect our tent before the throng began to gather," continued Reginald Plantagant Poindexter. "To approach the grounds we had to pass through a narrow lane. I was leading my people on my donkey, when of a sudden I heard a rough voice challenge me, and looked up to see the large black bore of a gigantic revolver pointed at my head. At the same time I beheld the most villainous countenance, peering over it, that ever grew on the head of a man. Across the brutal lip a long red gash extended and his eyes were those of a wild beast."

"Hands up!" cried he of the evil face. I came to a stop, for I saw that he might at any moment press the trigger with his finger and blow my head off. He was very rude and unappreciative of art, for he asked me in a coarse manner what sort of an outfit I had. 'Sir,' said I, 'I have no outfit. We are a band of artists playing for the edification and instruction of the people.'

"Play us a tune, then," said he. I explained to the boor that we did not play music, but depicted the strange, sweet story of little Eva and Uncle Tom. He got angry and was going to shoot us all. But when he saw my

bloodhounds, which we use in the play, he burst out laughing and asked me what kind of dogs I called them. With all the dignity I could summon I told him that I called them bloodhounds. "Them bloodhounds?" he said, in his coarse way, "them's not bloodhounds, them's coon dogs." With that he took a shot at them, and they, never having been treated in that manner before, broke and ran, and were soon over the horizon.

"Curses on the varlet! He then made the members of the troupe disgorge, and soon had at his feet all our properties. We had no money that he could take. One of the donkeys he appropriated, but gave me, as chief, the steed I now bestride. Aye, 'twas a scruffy trick he served us."

"When he had despoiled us he drove us into the grove where one of the band kept watch over us. At the end of the lane he lay in watch for the merry picnickers, and as they came he stopped them and robbed them of their pelf, taking that which best suited him of their wealth. He was looking for horses, evidently, for he examined all the horses that came, choosing this and rejecting that, until he had examined all that came. As he robbed one family or party he passed them on into the grove, where one of his varlets kept guard with a big pistol. So he lay like a spider in its web to catch the innocent, until all the picnickers had passed in review, then having secured four of the best horses in the lot, and robbed every man of his watch and money, he set fire to my properties and burned up the whole show. That is all of my sad tale, and now pray let me be on my way to weep alone, for I am sorry company, and my troupe of players is scattered and I am alone."

"Not so fast," said Ted. "Reducing your high-flown language to simple story, I understand that early this morning a gang of desperadoes—from your description of the leader, the Prior gang—held up your company and destroyed your property, then held up and robbed the people of Wetumka and stole their money and horses. Am I right?"

"Aye, marry, you are, good sir," replied the stroller. "And they would have killed me because I resented their unholy jests, which were inspired by the dignity of my bearing and my eloquence, when I drew myself up and recited to them *Hamlet's* soliloquy, which I may say is my greatest effort; but an unappreciative public clamors for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' instead of the words of the immortal Bard of Avon, and thus the world has lost in me one of the greatest impersonators of the melancholy Dane."

"I reckon yer all right mentally," said Bud, looking at the actor critically; "only it seems mighty hard for yer ter talk United States. Wuz yer brought up thet a way er did it grow on yer?"

"Ah! I see you have no soul for art, good friend," said the "Tommer" sadly, with a shake of his head.

"Mebbe I ain't," said Bud, "but I got some sense at that, an' I want ter tell yer thet you better jine this yere caravan er ther bugaboos will ketch yer ef yer go wanderin' erbout the peairies lookin' like thet."

So it was that Reginald Plantagant Poindexter temporarily joined the young roughriders.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE WHITE CLOTH.

The boys rode off for the town of Wetumka, taking with them the actor, who thought the world was losing its greatest exponent of *Hamlet* when it let him play in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." When they arrived at the town they found the populace in a great state of excitement over the extraordinary event of the morning. So late a holdup had never been attempted in the vicinity, and while they were more or less accustomed to train robberies, and even having desperado gangs raid a town, carrying away with them the loot of a bank and leaving behind them one or two of their boldest citizens dead in the street, the complete success of this coup of the Prior gang, and its novelty, had aroused the town to its highest pitch.

The organization of a posse of citizens to go after the Priors and give them a battle to the death was being discussed on the streets when the boys arrived. But it had



progressed no further than talk, for the reason that they could find no one who was bold enough to assume the leadership and ride forth at the head of the vigilance committee.

However, when the advance upon the town of the young roughriders was discovered the citizens rushed for their Winchesters and six-shooters, for, whether they would take the risk of going out after the Priors or not, they were not afraid to defend their homes.

But when they saw that the boys all wore the same make of khaki uniforms they were convinced that they were troops come to their aid, having heard of the outrage.

The boys were met by a committee of citizens with their Winchesters at full cock, and held at the hip in true Western style.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked the leader.

"We are known as the Young Roughriders," answered Ted, "and we are after information that will put us on the trail of the Prior gang."

"Then you've come to the right place," said the leader. "We were just going to send a posse out after them ourselves, but if you are going to them there is no necessity for us doing so."

"Looks like it," said Ted coolly.

"What is your idea in going after the Priors?" asked the leader suspiciously.

"In the first place, I am a United States marshal," said Ted, "and the members of the gang killed a man near the Mulhall ranch last night, and made off with valuable property."

"Then you are only doing your duty," said the leader complacently.

"Think so?" said Ted, who was somewhat disgusted at the fellow for throwing the responsibility upon the young roughriders in such an easy manner. "Well, you could do no less than to put us on their trail, and help us to assist this poor fellow, who was totally cleaned out by them, on his way."

"Let him shift for himself," said the leader. "We lost more than he did."

"How much did you lose?" asked Ted.

"I lost four dollars and a silver watch, but some of the boys lost their horses, and a good many of us had our guns taken from us and several had to give up all the money they were packing at the time. For that reason we don't feel like we could help any one. Charity begins at home, you know."

"Yes, I've heard that, and it seems to have had a strong growth in this town. By the way, if I should happen to get your horses back I suppose I better pay the freight on them home."

"No," said the leader eagerly. "If you get them send us a telegram, and we'll have one of the boys go after them."

"Thank you," said Ted, and the boys grinned appreciatively. "Now tell us which way they went, and we'll take our departure."

"None of us know which way they went," answered the fellow, moving away.

"Say, mister, I know where they went," said a half-grown boy. "I was out rabbit shootin' this evenin', an' I saw four fellers ride up to Rufe Benson's place. I recognized two or three of the hosses they wuz ridin' ez hosses as belonged in this town, an' when I told the men here they laughed at me, and said that Rufe was too honest to take in such a mess. I knowed that as well as they, but what's to prevent them from jest makin' Rufe take 'em in at the point of the pistol?"

"You've got a great head on you, boy, and I think you are right," said Ted. "By the way, what is your name? I would like to see you again if ever I come this way again."

"My name is Danny Perkins," replied the lad. "Say, can I go with you when you go to Rufe Benson's?"

"That will depend upon whether your father will let you go or not," replied Ted. "It's going to be a pretty dangerous piece of work."

"No, you can't go, Danny Perkins!" shouted a man who was in the crowd that surrounded the boys. "If I catch you follerin' them fellers I'll skin you alive."

"Pop says I can't go, and that settles it," said the lad, with deep disappointment in his voice. "But I can go with you a part of the way, and show you where Rufe lives. But I know he is on the square and that them Priors has either killed Rufe or made him take 'em in by force. Billy Benson, his son, is my chum, and a squarer boy you'll not find."

"All right," said Ted, who had taken a fancy to the boy at the first word. "There's a five-dollar gold piece in it for your trouble if you show us Benson's house."

The boy was almost tickled to death at the prospect of the reward, as he had never before in his life had so much money to call his own.

But before they rode out of town the boys, at the instance of Ted, started the unfortunate "Tommer" on the highway to fortune again by "chipping in" and raising enough money to buy him a ticket to Council Bluffs, Iowa, which, strangely enough, is the outfitting station for most of the Uncle Tom shows which infest the West. Besides ticket money, there was enough over to enable Reginald Plantagant Poindexter to start out with another show. In spite of his eccentricities of speech and manner, they found the old "Tommer" a decent fellow.

It was late in the evening before they reached the farm of Rufe Benson, and there Ted told Danny to run home, after giving him his five dollars.

As it was dark, Ted thought it unsafe to make an attack on the place that night, because they did not know the lay of the land, which the Priors did, and they might easily escape in the darkness.

At any rate, he did not know positively whether or not they were in the house. They might have departed a short time after Danny had seen them ride up.

"I'm not going to take any chances on this thing," said Ted. "I'm going up to the house to take a look and see for myself whether or not they are there."

"Let me go with you," said half a dozen voices at once.

"No you don't," said Ted, with a laugh. "There is a chance of the fellow who goes getting discovered and having a bullet plow him. We can't spare more than one at a time. No, you fellows stay here, and if I need help very badly you'll know it. Then you must all rush and give them a good, stiff fight."

With this understanding Ted left his horse with the boys, who were concealed behind a grove at some distance from the house, but which was, however, in plain view.

Ted crept along in the shadow of the timber as far as he could go, and there paused for several minutes to reconnoiter the situation.

He was looking for a guard whom, he thought, might be walking around the house. But he saw no movement, and, getting down on his hands and knees, began to crawl forward toward the house.

When he came to the wire fence surrounding the yard he crawled along it, looking for a gate, which he soon found.

He had just opened it when a dog came rushing across the yard at him. The dog did not bark, but gave a low vicious growl. It was the house dog, and Ted knew that if it made an outcry he was lost.

He remained perfectly still until the dog was right upon him, and before the astonished canine realized what was happening, Ted had seized it by the throat and shut off its wind. When the dog ceased its struggles Ted threw it aside and hid himself behind the gatepost, for he had seen a man's shadow against the lighted window, and the next instant the door flew open, sending a broad shaft of light across the yard. A boy stood in the doorway, and Ted heard him say, "It was Rover, I guess. He heard a coon down by the creek and he's down there by this time after it."

"All right," shouted a gruff voice. "Come in and close the door."

Ted waited a few minutes before proceeding, in order to give whoever was in the house a chance to quiet down. Then he crawled across the yard.

When he reached the wall of the house he cautiously raised up and looked in at the window.

He saw that they were on the right track. Facing him, not six feet away, he saw an enormous man with



a livid scar across the mouth, whom he knew at once to be Scar-face Dick Prior. There were three other men, evidently strangers, in the room. They were all heavily armed, and sat with their Winchesters across their laps. In the room with them was an old man, who sat in a very dejected posture, and an old lady, who looked mad clear through. In one corner was a boy of about eleven years, who could not take his eyes off Scar-face Dick, whom he regarded with something like awe.

This was the Prior gang sure enough, and Ted crept back to where the boys were and told them the result of his investigation.

"We'll wait until they come out in the morning," said Ted. "If they do not suspect that they have been trailed here they will probably come out boldly. We will have the house surrounded and do our best to get them. We will take watches to-night to see that they do not get away, and every fellow not on watch must get all the sleep he can. I will take the last watch, early in the morning."

Ted then told off the watches, and curling himself up on the ground with his saddle for a pillow, slept soundly.

Just about daylight, as Ted was watching the house from the concealment of the fence corner, the door opened and a man came out. It was Scar-face Dick. He looked about him long and carefully, and, seeing nothing to alarm him, stretched his arms above his head and yawned. With another look about the country, he returned into the house and closed the door behind him.

A few minutes afterward the door opened again, and the boy came out with a milk pail in his hand, and walked toward where Ted was hiding.

As he was passing, Ted reached out and pulled him down, at the same time placing his hand over the boy's mouth to stifle his cries.

"Now, listen to me," said Ted, in a low, kindly voice; "I am not going to hurt you. I am your friend, and the friend of Danny Perkins, who told me about you. I am a United States deputy marshal, and I am after the Priors, who are in your house, and I want you to help me. If you will promise to say nothing and make no outcry that can be heard in the house I will take my hand off your mouth and we will have a little talk. Nod your head if you promise."

The boy nodded, and Ted removed the hand from his mouth.

"When you go back to the house I want you to walk past the window with a white cloth in your hand, just when they get ready to come out."

The boy nodded, and said he would have to hurry with his milking and return, or they would come in search of him.

In about fifteen minutes the boy walked past Ted without looking at him, and went into the house.

Ted signaled the boys in the grove to be in readiness. The minutes passed and Ted could hear the rattle of knives and forks on china, and knew that the outlaws were at breakfast.

Suddenly Ted saw the boy pass the window with a towel in his hand.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A CLEVER RUSE.

Ted was crouched behind the end of the fence with his Winchester, ready to fire, and the boys were in the grove on the alert for what was to come.

Without warning, the door was flung open and a strange procession came forth.

First came Rufe Benson, behind whom crouched a man with his gun over the old man's shoulder. From his size, Ted knew that the man so concealed was none other than Scar-face Dick himself.

Behind this pair came old Mrs. Benson concealing the body of another outlaw, who also had his gun resting upon her shoulder. Then followed the boy, Billy Benson, behind whom crouched the third desperado.

In the rear followed a slender, dark man, whose head was bowed upon his chest in a most dejected manner. This, no doubt, was the Spaniard, upon whose back the map was tattooed.

At a signal from Ted the boys leaped from their places of concealment, and formed a line around the house.

"I thought so," yelled Scar-face Dick from behind his human barricade. "I smelled you fellers when I come out early this morning. I want ter give yer warnin' right now that if a shot is fired at us we will shoot this old man and his wife and boy. Now shoot if ye want ter, an' after these folks aire dead we'll fight it out."

This feature of their coming was totally unexpected by Ted. He was so astonished for a few moments that he could say nothing. Then he turned to the boys and made a motion with his hand that they were not to fire. The boys were too far away to hear the threat made by Scar-face Dick, but they saw the ruse employed by the outlaws and knew that they could not fire.

"You are not only a miserable coward, but you are a murderer and a brutal villain, Scar-face Dick Prior, and in spite of this I will get you yet, and see you hanged," said Ted.

Ted said this because he hoped to make the desperado angry enough to throw caution to the wind, and cast aside his bodyguard and come out in a fair fight.

But Prior was not to be tempted.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, young feller, an' take that," he shouted, and fired a shot over the old man's shoulder.

Ted had not come from behind his post, and he felt that the villain was going to shoot. Before the last word was out of Scar-face Dick's mouth he dodged behind the post and the ball from the Winchester screeched past it.

Three more shots followed in quick succession and buried themselves in the gatepost.

The other members of the gang followed the example of their leader, and shot over the shoulders of their protectors at the boys, who were standing at the edge of the wood.

The boys dropped for cover instantly. They dared not fire in return, and they fumed and fretted that they had to tamely hide and be shot at without having the opportunity to make a return fire.

Prior and his gang were backing farther and farther away all the time, being very careful to keep the bodies of their victims always between them and the rifles of the young roughriders. They followed the fence down to the horse corral, and there they leaped for their horses and were off before the boys could get to their own horses. As the bandits galloped away they turned in their saddles and sent a volley of shots after the boys.

In a few moments they were over the ridge, galloping like the wind, for they were all splendidly mounted.

Ted knew that it would be useless to pursue them at that time.

Scar-face Dick had clearly outwitted him. It would have been better generalship to have gone into the house after the villains during the night, but how was he to know that the outlaw would resort to such a clever trick?

Prior evidently believed that the attacking party was interested in his captive. He was a shrewd man with an abundance of imagination, as his career proved. He knew, therefore, that when the body of the brother of the man with the map was discovered some one would get at the story of the treasure, and that he would be pursued for the map, rather than for his crime of murdering the Spaniard. He was willing to take no chances in an open or running fight at this time, for he wanted the treasure, and wanted it quickly. After he got it he didn't care what became of the man with the map, and had even thought that the safest way would be to kill him.

Ted was greatly endowed with a kind of intuition, which enabled him to immediately see or imagine a truth without its being in evidence, which is possessed by most successful men, and he exactly hit upon what had been in the mind of Scar-face Dick.

He called the boy to him, for he wanted to know what part he had in the seeming fact that the outlaw knew of their presence outside.

"Billy, what did you tell Prior when you went back into the house after talking to me?" he asked the boy in a kindly way.



"I didn't say a word to him," answered the boy. "He just came up to me and looked at me for a moment with his green eyes, and I shook inside, for he seemed to be reading what was on my mind. But he turned away and didn't say anything."

"That's the truth," put in the boy's mother. "Billy didn't say a word to that man."

"And then when they got ready to go I walked past the window as I said I would, and he looked at me again, and I know he knew what I was doing, and then he put us in front of him and his men, and told us he would kill us if we tried to get away, and then we come out."

"Did you hear anything of their plans?" asked Ted, turning to the old man.

"No; they said nothing about their business in my presence," was the reply. "But I knew who they were, and that they had stolen the foreigner they had with them. He was the funniest man I ever saw, for he was crying to himself all the time."

"They had just killed his brother," said Ted.

"I heard him talk," said Billy. "I slept in the front room with them last night."

"What happened?"

"When they thought I was asleep they called up the foreigner and made him take off his shirt. They thought I was asleep. The big fellow came and held the lamp close to my face for a minute to see if I was awake. I guess they thought I was asleep, for then they made the fellow take off his shirt by making signs to him, as if he couldn't talk."

"What did they do with him then?"

"They turned him around with his back to the light and began to look at it awful close."

"Could you see what they were looking at?"

"No, he was facing me, and he looked awful scared. The big fellow you called Scar-face Dick was pointing to something on the fellow's back and talking in whispers most of the time, so that I could only hear a word now and then. He was talking mostly to one of the others whom he called Harry, and telling him to do something, which Harry didn't want to do. Then he drew his gun and pointed it at Harry and swore awful, and told him he would kill him if he didn't do it; then Harry said he would. It was something about going somewhere and hurrying back."

"What else did you hear?"

"I heard him say he had a good mind to run his knife around it, whatever it was, and strip it off, but Harry and the other fellow, whose name I did not hear, begged him not to. 'It would only kill him, and we have enough against us as it is. And if he dies we will not have the words.' The big fellow said that it was true, but that he was tired of lugging the dago around."

"You said he told Harry to hurry back. Did he say where to come to?"

"Oh, yes, I almost forgot. He said, 'We've got a hard ride ahead of us, and we'll be pretty tired. We'll rest a day or two at the old place near Chickasha.'"

"That's the best thing you've told us yet, Billy, and you are a smart boy. I gave your friend Danny five dollars for bringing me here, and you shall have one, too, for what you have done for us."

Ted did not know where the "old place" spoken of by Scar-face Dick was located, but he knew where Chickasha was, on the border of the country in which lay the Wichita Mountains of the Indian Territory, the lands of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians.

"We're in for a long ride, also, boys," he said, "and we might as well be starting on it. But we will take our time, as we do not want to arrive in that country and find those fellows with our horses jaded. On with your saddles and we will be off."

But Mrs. Benson insisted that they stay long enough for breakfast, which they were very glad to do, as they were unprepared to cook a meal for themselves, and they had a long ride before them, so that an hour spent at breakfast now might mean as much as six hours later.

Billy caught three fat young chickens and plucked them while his mother was making biscuits and cooking the other "fixings," as she called them, for the meal. It was

a splendid country breakfast, and when they had eaten, bidding good-by to the hospitable old man and woman and the boy, who adored Ted by this time, although he did not know that he was the redoubtable Ted Strong, of whom he had heard so much. Had he known it, the boy would have felt very proud, for he had always wished to know the gallant young roughrider.

Now they were off, heading southwest. That night they slept in good beds in the hotel at El Rena, and early the next morning started due south for Chickasha.

When they were nearing Chickasha they came upon a bunch of cattle grazing on the plain. Every one of them was homesick for the sight of a bunch of steers, and when they rode into the herd that was scattered over the Chickasha trail they kept on until they came upon the day watch of cowboys.

Ted approached one of them and began to talk. The cow-puncher was a little slow in getting into conversation at first, as cowmen sometimes are with strangers. But it did not take him long to see that Ted knew the business better than he did himself. After that he was very friendly.

"Did you see three or four fellows go by this way bound for Chickasha?" asked Ted. "One of them was a big fellow with a scar across his mouth."

"I shore did," said the cowboy. "They're camped over there on the Wichita River. See that bunch of cottonwoods there to the right? Well, that's where they are. I see them there this morning. Four of them went in yesterday, but there was only three this morning."

Ted thanked him and they rode on.

When they were within a quarter of a mile of the woods they dismounted and crept forward.

They could hear cries of terror and pain as they proceeded.

Ted believed that they could come only from the miserable Spanish prisoner, who was being tortured by the brute, Scar-face Dick.

His blood boiled with anger as he thought of the helpless foreigner, who evidently could speak no English, and was being made to suffer because Scar-face Dick was too ignorant to be able to speak Spanish, which was almost as necessary as clothes in the Southwest.

Softly, silently as Indians on the warpath, the boys crept through the woods until they could see into a clearing on the river bank where there was a camp. The Spaniard was tied to a tree. He looked half dead. Evidently he had just been brutally beaten.

At a little distance Scar-face Dick was shaving himself. One of the other desperadoes was holding the looking-glass for him.

Suddenly the outlaw stopped shaving, with the razor poised in the air. He had seen Ted's reflection in the glass.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### READING THE MAP.

Ted knew that he had been seen. The attitude of Scar-face Dick proclaimed it. Without moving his head or stirring a particle, Ted gave the order to get in readiness for trouble.

At the same time he could see from the movement of the lips of the outlaw that he was telling his partner what he saw in the glass.

Ted had no doubt that Scar-face Dick was telling the other what to do. He was planning a defense for themselves, for he knew that if Ted had brought his whole party he was greatly outnumbered, and was probably cursing his luck and wondering how Ted had trailed him to this spot.

He had resumed his shaving operations, and Ted knew that this was only a bluff to make Ted believe that he had not yet discovered him, and to gain a little time, as he did not believe the attack would take place for a moment or two at least. He needed time to instruct his accomplice.

Ted could see their rifles leaning against a tree about ten paces from where they were standing, and he knew that they were so quick with their weapons that they would get to them and open fire in the space of a second or two.



But he was willing to give Scar-face Dick a chance for his life at that, however much he wanted the chief outlaw, and proposed to have him.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet and dashed into the clearing, shouting:

"Surrender, and we will not fire!"

Razor and glass were instantly dropped. The two men leaped like cats to the tree where their weapons awaited them.

They had them in a shorter space of time than it takes to tell it. With incredible rapidity they wheeled, and both began to fire from the hip without taking aim.

Their rifles were discharged so rapidly that there was no perceptible interval between the shots. A bullet tore Ted's left sleeve to pieces and burned his arm. A second knocked his hat from his head. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Kit Summers grow white and fall to the ground.

All around Ted rifles were cracking, and the air was full of the fumes of burned powder.

Ted had begun to shoot also, although he was hardly conscious of it, for he was so angry with Scar-face Dick that everything else seemed to be obliterated from his mind, except that he thought that he had had this same feeling on the battlefield in Cuba, when he was firing steadily while the bullets of the Spanish sharpshooters were knocking his comrades down all about him.

He saw the fellow who had been holding the glass for Scar-face Dick throw up his arms and fall prone to the earth, and had a feeling of pity for him.

Then he saw the chief scoundrel put his hand to his side, and stagger. But he soon recovered, and, raising his rifle to his shoulder, took deliberate aim at him. Ted had presence of mind enough to throw himself on the ground and the ball sang its way over his head.

Scar-face Dick threw his rifle from him, and before Ted could get to his feet or even raise his own rifle to fire, the outlaw ran a few steps to a horse that was standing within the shadow of the forest, and leaped into the saddle. He was instantly lost to view among the trees.

Ted now ran into the clearing, followed by the boys. Stopping for an instant to turn over the bandit who had fallen, he shrank back with a feeling of horror. He was dead. Whose bullet had killed him in that fusillade of shots would never be known.

Ted then turned his attention to the unfortunate Spaniard.

The man had fainted from pain, fatigue, and general abuse on the part of Scar-face Dick. Ted immediately released him from his agonizing position against the tree, and laid him upon the ground, while Carl Schwartz ran to the river near by and fetched a hatful of water.

The Spaniard was a pitiable object. His body was naked from the waist up, and was covered with bruises where he had been beaten.

When Carl arrived with the water Ted bathed the Spaniard's temples and poured some between his parted lips. A few moments of this treatment began to have its effect, and he shuddered as with the pain of returning consciousness. Then he groaned and opened his eyes, into which there came a look of terror. Evidently he was expecting another beating.

"You are among friends," Ted hastened to assure him in Spanish.

At hearing his own language a look of relief, which changed to joy, came into his face.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed.

Ted then told him of his rescue, and directed him to be calm and to rest before he talked much, and asked him if there was anything he wanted.

"Food, food!" the poor wretch cried. "They have given me nothing to eat for days, and have kept me tied to that tree. They beat me until I fainted, and when I recovered they asked me questions I could not answer, then beat me into unconsciousness again. They could not speak my language and I cannot speak English. I wonder I did not die."

"Well, you are safe now, and will be well treated and protected," said Ted gently, for he saw that the Spaniard

was so weak and ill that he was likely to become hysterical.

The boys had searched the outlaws' camp and found plenty of provisions, and, having built a fire, began to cook food for the starving Spaniard. When it was done he ate ravenously, lying on his back, and fed in minutes by Ted, who knew the danger of letting him eat too much.

When he had finished eating his head fell back, and he sank into a deep and deathlike slumber. For days he had not slept, his only lapses from the consciousness being when he fainted from the agony he was compelled to endure.

Ted covered him with his own coat, and Carl rolled his up for a pillow, which he gently placed beneath the sleeping man's head.

Then they left him to sleep undisturbed, while they cared for the body of the dead bandit.

Scar-face Dick had made a clean escape. Ted had mounted the horse of the dead bandit and had scoured the woods, but no trace of him could be found, save a trail that led off to the west. This he did not care to follow just at the present, as he wanted to see the Spaniard on his feet and restored to health in some manner before going on the trail of Prior.

He had no doubt but he would meet the bandit chief soon again, for he was known to have members of his gang scattered all over the Indian Territory and Texas, whom he could summon to his side whenever necessary. What would be more natural than that he should at once seek to bring some of his worst men together and attack the roughriders in force?

Ted knew, of course, that what Scar-face Dick wanted above all else was the Spaniard with the map, dead or alive.

He wanted the fortune, and the Spaniard was the key that would unlock the treasure vault. Without him it was lost to him forever.

The Spaniard slept on without stirring from the position in which he had fallen when drowsiness overcame him. In his mind was the feeling of security which Ted's words and presence had given him, and so he had given himself up to sleep.

All the boys took turns in watching him to see that he was able to sleep without discomfort, and when night came on with its chill prairie air a camp fire was built, and coats were warmed and laid over him.

Seven hours he slept thus without moving. Then he stirred, and a sigh escaped him.

"Agua," he muttered, and a cup of water was placed at his lips. He drank eagerly.

Suddenly he sat up straight. His bright, intelligent eyes ran around the circle of boys who were sitting about the camp fire, until they rested upon Ted.

"My friend," he said, "come to me, I have something to ask you."

Ted went to his side.

"Tell me, do you know aught of my brother?"

Ted told him gently how he had heard the cries in the night, and had found his brother and taken him to the Mulhall ranch house, and of his death.

"Did he speak before he died?" asked the Spaniard.

"He did," Ted replied.

"Did he tell why he and I came to this country?" asked the Spaniard. The tears were coursing down his cheeks.

"He told me all," said Ted. "And when he died my friends and I started out to find you and rescue you."

"Thank Heaven you came in time," said the Spaniard reverently. "Had you come to-morrow I believe I would have been dead. I have my life to thank you for, and I owe it to you. I shall reward you with treasure if the tradition of our family should be true, and the treasure left in America by Cortez shall be recovered."

"When you are able we will talk about that," said Ted. "Meanwhile you are still weak, and the best medicine for you is sleep, and plenty of it."

The night passed quietly, and, although Ted set a guard, they heard nothing more of Scar-face Dick.

Ted had no doubt that the outlaw was wounded. He had seen him press his hand to his side before he escaped. He had probably gone to one of the towns along the railroad where he had friends, and where he could get



medical assistance if it should be necessary. But it would take a pretty deep and serious wound to keep him out of villainy for long.

Kit Summers had received a nasty clip in the shoulder from one of the desperado's bullets, but it was only a flesh wound, and, although he had a little fever, the wound was beginning to heal already, and there seemed no reason to think that it would prove at all serious.

By morning the Spaniard had so far recovered from his bitter experiences with the outlaws that when the boys gathered around him to see how he was he threw off the coat that was around him and sat up. Those boys who were behind him uttered an exclamation of surprise.

On his back, covering the skin from his shoulder blades to his waist line, was a map in three colors, drawn with all the skill of a professional map maker.

The Spaniard made an involuntary movement as if to cover himself.

It was the result of habit, for ever since the map had been pricked into his skin it had been part of his duty to his family to keep it concealed from public view.

But now he had no shirt to cover it, and Ted, noticing his embarrassment, hastened to reassure him that his secret was safe with the young roughriders.

"I believe it, señor," said the Spaniard, "and therefore I wish you and your friend would study it. For, although I have never seen it myself, except in a mirror, I know every line and mark on it from having studied that from which it was copied, on the back of my father."

"When was this map placed upon your back?" asked Ted.

"When I was twenty-one years old," answered the Spaniard. "My father, who had worn the map ever since his youth, was growing very old and feeble, and, fearing that he had not much longer to live, he prepared to transfer the responsibility to me. We sent all the way to the Philippines for a famous Moro tattooer, whose father had copied the map from the back of my grandfather to that of my father. It was thought safer to get an artist from afar, who would not understand the nature of the drawing."

"I suppose it took a long time to draw the map on your back," said Ted.

"It consumed months of agony, during which I was often down with the fever," replied the Spaniard.

Ted had been studying the map carefully while the Spaniard was talking. The map seemed to be made up of two parts. The upper two-thirds of the back was given up to a primitive map of the North American continent, as known to the Spanish invaders of the sixteenth century. It showed the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River and other streams, and in the interior a small chain of mountains, with the Rocky Mountains farthest west.

But the lower map was of this lesser chain.

"The Wichita Mountains!" exclaimed Ted.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### MYSTIFYING DIRECTIONS.

As Ted shouted "The Wichita Mountains!" the boys crowded about him, studying the map.

"See, it is as plain as a book," said Ted. "No doubt Sear-face Dick read it aright, for it is simple enough, even though the Spaniards in the years between fifteen thirty-seven and the end of that century had not traveled all over this part of the country. But they were famous pathfinders and could make maps with the best of them."

"You are right," said the Spaniard. "I have found this map of the continent exact in almost every particular, except that you will notice that there is no account on the map of distances, which I found to be much greater than I had expected, for when I left Spain I had no idea of the vastness of the American continent."

"What are those ships out there on the left-hand side in those little blue waves?" asked one of the boys.

"Those are the Spanish caravels crossing the Atlantic," answered Ted. "Here is the island of Cuba, and it is practically the same as on the maps in our modern geographies. Here is the Gulf of Mexico. You see that the coast line to the north trails away into nothing, which

shows that their knowledge of the lay of the land was rather hazy up that way."

"This blue streak zigzagging along here is the Mississippi River, I suppose," said Ben Tremont.

"Yes, and the Arkansas and Canadian rivers are marked here," answered Ted, "only they are not carried as far as our maps take them to-day, but they bear in the general direction. This plain marked here as the 'Llano Indio,' I take to be the present Oklahoma and Indian Territory of to-day and part of Texas. It really is a marvelous map, under the circumstances."

"Can you read the inscriptions on the various parts of the map?" asked Ben.

"Some of them are pretty difficult," said Ted. "They are in old Spanish, and the printing is in the old lettering."

"That is what confused the men who carried me off," said the Spaniard, when Ted had translated for his benefit the comments of the boys. "He could not read the directions on the map, and by signs tried to make me tell what they were, and when I shook my head he beat me."

"As I read the map," said Ted, "the maker went out over the route indicated on the larger map, and left the record of it so plain that any one seeking to go back over it again might do so easily. But there are a lot of objects and marks outlined here that I don't understand."

"For instance, here is said to be a large town on the edge of a swamp or sedgy lake. According to my knowledge of the country there is nothing there but a sandy desert."

"But in those days there might have been a large native town on a lake at that place," said Ben. "You know the mouth of the Mississippi was away to the north of where it is now."

"Yes, that probably accounts for it," said Ted.

"What are these small arrows pointing up from the south?"

"Those, I take it, point the way of the expedition on its journey from Mexico to the land of gold, as they imagined this country to be," said Ted.

He put the question to the Spaniard.

"Yes," said he, "the arrows mark the path of Cabrillo, Cortez's lieutenant in charge. As the story came to us from our ancestor the Spaniard conqueror heard of a mountain of gold in the North and fitted out an expedition to go in search of it, placing at the head of it Cabrillo, a young man who had been with him in Mexico. They found a mountain, or, rather, a small range of low mountains, that looked like the continuation of the foothills of the great mountains to the west, which some of the adventurers of Mexico had seen in their travels. They had hardly arrived at the range, however, and begun to explore it when they were attacked by a large body of savages, who were very brave and warlike."

"Did the Spaniards give them fight?" asked Ted.

"They did, indeed," answered the human map. "But they had not come prepared for a campaign, as their informant had told them that the Northern Indians were exceedingly peaceful. But on their way north the Spaniards had plundered all the tribes in their path, and had in consequence a vast amount of loot. These plundered tribes were in a way connected with the Northern Indians, probably allies for defense against the Spaniards. The result was that before the Spaniards could make more than a cursory examination of the range they were attacked, and after many of them had been killed the others fled as best they could. Cabrillo and a small band reached Mexico alive. Another expedition, under my ancestor, fled to the east until they reached a river which they followed to the Father of Waters, as the Indians called the Mississippi, and after many dangers and privations reached the Gulf of Mexico."

"But what of the treasure which they captured by the way?"

"That was in charge of my ancestor, who had been captain of the personal guard of the great Captain Cortez, some years before in Mexico. In the engagement with the Indians he and his men became separated from the chief. To prevent the treasure from falling into the hands of the Indians my ancestor looked for a safe place in which to hide it until they could return in force, defeat the Indians, and recover it."



"Then the larger map tells where to find the range in which it was left, while the other map tells particularly its exact hiding place?"

The Spaniard nodded. "That is correct," he said.

"Well," said Ted, "I think it is safe to say that your ancestor has plainly indicated on this upper map that it is the Wichita Mountains that he meant. The Indians of to-day have a legend that somewhere in the mountains there is a large amount of gold and silver, which their ancestors mined and used in trading with the Indians of the South, but the white prospectors since have failed to locate it, although they have come upon traces of ancient mines, with dumps of waste covered with heavy vegetation, showing their antiquity."

"Ask him if he has any idea of the extent of the treasure," said Ben, who had a mind for figures and for the actualities.

Ted put the question, and the Spaniard shrugged his shoulders.

This evidently was one of the things he did not care much about discussing until he knew the boys better.

"Before he died, your brother said something about there being a legend in your family to the effect that the place of concealment of the treasure was guarded in a very peculiar and effective manner," said Ted. "I hope it is not another story of ghosts and the spirits of the Spaniards, who were killed in the fight, keeping watch over it, for we are pretty materialistic, and do not believe much in ghosts."

The Spaniard smiled in a peculiar way and shook his head to indicate that he did not take much stock in ghosts, either.

"No," he answered, "it is not guarded by ghosts or spirits, and I cannot tell you how or by what it is guarded until I am sure we have found the place; then if you consent to help me to get it I will tell you."

"Very well," said Ted, laughing, "if there are no ghosts or spirits in it we are not afraid of what we see."

"Don't be too sure of that," said the Spaniard moodily. "There are many worse things than ghosts. I myself have seen them. But while they might have terrors for you, they have none for me, for I know the secret. You will understand why I cannot tell you that now; for then it would be no secret, and I am bound to the family secret with an oath I would not dare break."

"Very well," said Ted. "We don't want your secret, and we have no idea of sharing your treasure if it is found. We came on this expedition to capture Scar-face Dick more than anything else, which was a duty, and to rescue you, which was an act of mercy."

The Spaniard assured Ted of his gratitude, and said that it was not because he distrusted the boys that he did not tell all that he knew of the treasure hidden in the mountains, but on account of the long years of secrecy that his forefathers had maintained about it, some of them even having endured tortures inflicted upon them by the crown of Spain rather than violate their oath.

"Then we will forget that part of it for the time being, and devote ourselves to unraveling the secrets of the map of the locality," said Ted. "If we can do that we will have no trouble in at least reaching the spot where the treasure was hidden, whether or not it is still there."

The lower map on the Spaniard's back was a sort of bird's-eye view, for it did not represent the landmarks on the flat, as in an ordinary map, but was a well-conceived drawing of trees, groves, rocks, ravines, and mountain peaks. On the flat surfaces between these pictures of things were pricked in black ink the directions to be followed.

It was, indeed, a very remarkable production, and represented a vast amount of labor, as well as much study, to make out its queer phraseology, which was couched in the old style.

Ted studied the map a long time with a puzzled frown on his face.

"Well, what do you make of it?" asked one of the boys.

"It's a hard nut to crack," answered Ted. "The trouble is that it was made to be used within a year, or only a few years afterward, at the longest. The maker had no idea that it would be four centuries before any one

would make use of it. As a result, he has used a great many perishable landmarks. Here are trees and ponds, and marks on prairie and hillside mentioned as pointing directly to a certain spot on the south side of a mountain. The trees, no doubt, have rotted and fallen to dust long ago, the ponds have dried up, the hillside marks have been washed away by the alternating rains and snows and consequent landslides.

"The map mentions, for instance, a certain oak tree, upon which the map maker cut his initials. This was in the year fifteen thirty-eight. What do you suppose has become of that tree in these days of firewood and fence posts, to say nothing about dry rot?"

"If it was an oak it may still be there," said Ben Tremont, "for oaks, you know, live for hundreds of years. I myself know of an oak in this country that was one thousand five hundred years old. There is no reason why that tree should not be standing to-day, unless, of course, some one has cut it down!"

"Well, here is what it says on the map, stripped of some of its quaint phrases which I cannot translate," said Ted.

"Seek well the way, for it be closed to man of no understanding. Look at the decline of the sun in the heavens. Then if ye be riding horse it will take you, with walking three hours, and so much the less for the canter or gallop, until ye see to south, which runs lengthwise with the stream ye be following, the hat of the Seville student. By which time we will have come to the oak of the sphere on its left hand. Herein have I cut the letters of my name, F. V., which shall be on the south side.

"So here ye shall see the dromedary in the south. But as ye journey away from the tree seeking the dromedary ye shall veer to the westward to avoid the Indian's leap, and thence one day the dromedary shall go and the camel shall come. For this ye shall seek, and vary not on the way, for the space of one day afoot and half of it by horse.

"Having proceeded thus far, ye shall come to view the *gemini*, and looking there through when the sun be in its declension one-half from his throne over head, ye shall observe the right shadow which will fall true. Its cap shall be thrown upon a needle, which no man may thread. The needle's point, which must be observed upon the sun's next declension, shall point into the tailor's lap. Seek no farther in any direction for any distance, for it shall avail not, but beware the sudden sink and be guided by the odor of the guards of the Inca's temple, which I have placed therein and which will permit of passage only when the spell is woven and the words spoken which I have whispered in your ear, and which shall last forever."

"Well, of all the stuff I ever heard, that takes the cake," muttered Ben Tremont.

"I've shore got ter go out an' lie on the grass ter rest my head," said Bud Morgan. "What does it all mean?"

"Search me," said Ted. "Do you understand it?" he asked the Spaniard. The bearer of the map shook his head.

"I only know the spell and the words," he said hopelessly.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SOLVING A RIDDLE.

"That's a job for a Philadelphia lawyer," sighed Ben Tremont, as he lay on the grass puzzling over the translation of the directions, which Ted had copied from the map on the back of Estaban Aguilar.

"It looks mighty hard at first because it was written to deceive any person into whose hands it fell who had not the other part of the story. But when we have figured it out I believe we shall find it very simple."

"Well, your ideas of simplicity and mine don't jibe worth a cent," growled Ben. "The more I read it the less I understand it. Now, for instance, what the deuce does he mean by the hat of the Seville student? And what do you make out of the *gemini*, the camel, and the dromedary, and the Indian's leap, the needle and the tailor's lap? He has sure got me guessing, that old moth-eaten Spaniard of fifteen hundred and froze to death, or whenever it was he lived."



"Each one of those figures of speech refers to some landmark. All we have to do is to find one and so get the thing started, then it will unravel itself like the toe of a knitted sock. I am going to try to get it started to-night."

"If you do, you have a head like a statesman," said Ben. "My head is already ringing, and I have been at it only half an hour."

Meanwhile Ted went off into the woods, and sitting down under a tree with the translation of the directions, began to work on it as he would on a puzzle. He had established two facts in his own mind which would serve as a starting point. First, according to the arrows of the map, the seeker was to come up the Mississippi to the Arkansas River and follow it to its source. Then a little distance off was the range of mountains, which could be none other than the Wichita Mountains. So far all was well.

After he had been gone about two hours the boys heard him yell, and in a moment he dashed into camp.

"I believe I have it, boys," he cried. Then he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. "Oh, it's so easy when you've got it."

"You seem to have got it pretty bad," growled big Ben. "Out with it, and you'll feel better."

"Oh, no, it's no fun, that way," cried Ted. "Why, it's just as easy as living on a farm. And to think that an Eastern college man had to give it up. Ben, I'm afraid you've been growing fat inside of your head since you've been out West."

"Oh, all right, smarty, have it your own way," snorted Ben. "You don't have to tell."

"Let us saddle and be moving," shouted Ted. "I want to get out and see how far wrong I am, anyhow."

The boys broke camp, and after saddling they set out with Ted and Aguilar in the lead, for Ted wanted the Spaniard at hand that he might consult his back from time to time.

They proceeded westward along the bank of the Wichita River.

"You see, it is like this," said Ted to Ben, who was riding on his right: "the translation says to 'look at the decline of the sun,' which means that we must travel to the westward. You see, the map maker is reversing his own line of march. He went down the streams as we are going up. Here he says that we must follow the stream which empties into the second river! This can be no other than the Wichita, and the 'second river' is the Arkansas. We are following his lead so far, I verily believe. It is the only stream which runs lengthwise with the south in this part of the country. When we have ridden two hours to the west we ought to see the Seville student's cap."

"Well, let's hope so," said Ben. "But the whole proposition looks like gibberish to me."

"We shall see."

They had ridden several miles, when suddenly Ted put his hand on the bridle of Ben's horse and brought it to a stop. At the same time he pointed to the south.

"Well?" asked Ben.

"Don't you see it?" asked Ted eagerly.

"See what?" asked Ben.

"Why, the cap of the Seville student, of course," said Ted.

Away off to the south they saw the blue blur of the mountains, and the easternmost rise was of the shape of the caps worn by the Spanish students. Ben looked at it a long time. Finally he said: "I believe I do see it. Certainly it does look like a Seville cap."

"That's our first clue," said Ted. "I believe we are on the right track." He called the attention of the other boys to it, and they agreed with him.

"Now we must look for the old oak, which, according to the inscription on the map, should be somewhere about here."

The boys scattered about the woods.

"Here you are," cried Kit Summers, at last. "Here's a bit of a tree that looks as if it was a million years old."

The boys went to where Kit was standing beside a gigantic stump which was about fifteen feet high, ragged

at the top and badly splintered. Evidently it had been struck by lightning several years before.

"The map calls it the oak of the 'sphere,'" said Ted. "I have been puzzling over that, but now I understand it. Without doubt this is the same oak, for see that great bunch on the left-hand side, a boll they call it; that's the sphere. Now let us see if we can find the initials of Francisco Aguilar, the map maker. That will settle it."

This should have been on the south side of the tree, but they could find nothing that looked like a monogram.

"That is not strange," said Ted. "The tree grows on the outside, and the bark has covered the cuts made four centuries ago. If we had an ax we could chop in and find out."

"Doc Fenton has a small ax," said Ben. "I will bring it."

A few vigorous chops with the ax peeled off the bark, and there, grown beneath the bark, were the scars of the cuts the Spanish soldier had put there when the country was young.

"Hurrah!" shouted Ted, in his enthusiasm. "We are on the right track now, that's certain."

"Here's where we ought to see the dromedary, whatever that means," said Ben Tremont.

"There it is," said Ted, pointing off to the southwest. "See that humpbacked mountain. Doesn't it look like a dromedary lying down?"

"We never had any in our family, all being Democrats, so I don't know them personally," said Ben. "But if you say it's a dromedary, why that goes with me."

"It's a day's journey before we'll see the camel," laughed Ted, "but before then we come to the Indian's leap. We shall see what we shall see."

It was dark when they made camp that night, after riding hard all day. Ted was up at daybreak, and, looking to the southwest, saw the "camel." This was only the "dromedary" seen from a westerly view. Now, instead of being a dromedary with only one hump, it was a camel with two.

"Wake up, fellows," cried Ted, "and see the 'camel.'"

"Why, that thar is Saddle Mounting," said Bud Morgan, in disgust. "I've knowed that mounting fer many moons. I've hunted an' slept on it many a night. I don't see nothin' funny erbout that ole heap o' rock."

"Let us have breakfast," said Ted, "for we must be off. By noon we ought to raise the 'gemini,' or twins, whatever they are."

As they rode along, Ted thought of the ingenuity of the Spanish map maker in giving names to his landmarks, for he could not have described them as well to a man's understanding by any other means.

By noon they could see around the side of "Saddle Mountain," as it was called, because it was shaped exactly like a big Mexican saddle, but Mexican saddles were not in vogue in the days of the map maker, and he was more familiar with the back of a camel.

During the morning they rode around the end of a deep rift in the surface of the prairie, evidently made by an earthquake. It was narrow, but very deep, and it was likely that the Indians had jumped their horses over it rather than ride around it.

When they stopped at noon to rest and feed the horses they saw to the west two tall peaks side by side, and of the same shape and size.

"There are your 'gemini,' the twins," said Ted. "We shall have to wait here until about three o'clock to see what he means by the right shadow being 'true.'"

When the sun was halfway from the zenith toward the western horizon they stood and looked at the shadows cast by the "gemini." The shadow to the south fell upon Saddle Mountain and was broken, while the shadow of the North Mountain fell across the prairie in a clean-cut, cone-shaped, dark mass. Where it came to a point Ted, with his field glasses, could make out a high, slender butt.

"I see the needle, fellows," he cried. "There it is to the east."

The boys took turns in looking through the glasses, and all identified the needlelike butt as the one mentioned on the map.



They were all greatly excited. It looked as if they were to find the hiding place of the treasure.

The Spaniard actually wept tears of joy at the prospect of soon seeing at last where his ancestor had hidden the Mexican loot.

They broke camp at once and galloped off in the direction of the "needle that no man can thread."

That night and the next day they spent in its vicinity, exploring the neighborhood thoroughly to see if they could not locate the "tailor's lap" without the aid of the needle's shadow. They drew straight lines from the needle to the mountainside, but could find nothing that in any way resembled a tailor or any part of him.

At three o'clock the following afternoon they watched for the shadow of the needle to point them to fortune. They were ready mounted on their horses to take up the pursuit and mark where it fell.

At last the sun was halfway down the sky, and the point of the needle, being deflected to one side by a mound, its point fell into a depression in the side of the mountain a hundred yards from the point which they had marked off in a direct line to the east from it.

"The master map maker was mighty shrewd in picking out his landmarks. He evidently knew that any one not authorized to hunt for the treasure, or happening upon his clues, would be deceived in this as in other things," said Ted. "Now that we have discovered the 'tailor's lap' we are on the verge of discovering the fortune. But there are still difficulties in the way. We are told to beware of two things, the sink and the guardians of the treasure. Of the first I know nothing, and can only guess that the latter is a good bluff invented by the map maker to scare out the timid, and even make the bold hesitate."

"Well, we will soon know," said Ben Tremont, "for I have discovered the entrance to the cave which is situated in the tailor's lap."

The boys flocked to the place where Ben said he had found the cave. The "tailor's lap" was a scooped-out place in the mountainside. From its outer edge to the wall it sloped down, where it presented the appearance of having been frequently visited. In fact, a path was worn down to the wall.

Having in mind the warning of the sink, which the map mentioned, the boys approached it cautiously. When halfway down the incline they could see a black hole in the wall of the basin. It was high enough to admit a man standing erect, and over it at one time had grown a mass of luxuriant foliage, but this was now torn and ragged. How it had come so none could conjecture.

Ted and the Spaniard were in advance and were standing peering into the darkness. They smelled a strange, fetid and sickening odor, which Ted attributed to gases escaping through fissures in the ground and gathering in the cave. Suddenly they began to hear a faint roaring noise far back in the cave.

It grew louder every minute, and seemed like the roar of an approaching wind storm.

Without further warning a terrible suction of air began into the cave. It was irresistible in its power. In an instant the boys who were standing behind turned and battled against it and got away. Ted, who was near the edge, clung to the rocky wall, but the Spaniard was swept into the cave.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### THE SPANIARD'S MISADVENTURES.

The terrible suction of the air into the cave ceased as suddenly as it began. It had lasted only a minute, yet its power was great enough to move several hundred pounds.

Was this, then, the terrible guardian of the cave? If so, how could they exercise it to break the spell? Ted, clinging for his life to the rocks that lined the entrance to the cave, thought these things, but found no answer. He felt the dread that a mystery of the sort always inspires, even in the bravest men. The thing that a courageous man can face and see and understand has no terrors, but the unknown racks the nerves and causes even the stoutest heart to waver.

When the wind ceased, Ted approached the entrance of the cave again and looked in to find some trace, if pos-

sible, of the Spaniard, who had been so unceremoniously whisked out of sight.

He heard nothing, and the strange odor he had perceived before was gone. The air in the cave, or such of it as he could feel, seemed fresh and cool.

Below him the floor of the cave fell off suddenly, he did not know how far. If the Spaniard had fallen into this he was probably dead, for though Ted called loudly, he got no response.

Twisting a handful of grass into a rope, Ted lighted it and tossed it into the cave. Leaning over the edge, he saw it fall until it burned to nothing and went out, and still it had not reached the bottom. He cast a stone within it, and after several moments he heard it strike against the bottom with a hollow sound.

Well, this was the end of the Spaniard if he had fallen into the pit. Again the warning of the map maker came to him. He wished now that he had heeded it.

He wondered how wide the chasm within the cave was, and, lighting a larger bundle of grass, held it above his head and looked across.

To his surprise it was only a few feet from one side to the other, and now he believed that perhaps after all Aguilar had escaped by being drawn across the chasm.

It was an uncanny place, and he went back to where the boys were standing, talking about the remarkable disappearance of the Spaniard.

"What are we to do, Ted?" asked Ben Tremont. "None of us is particularly delighted with the place."

"We cannot desert Aguilar, and I am going to try to devise a way to get into the cave. If we can get in, we can see our way about with our electric searchlights, which no wind can blow out. And I am going to try to find out what causes that wind. It is one of the strangest things how that wind began to suck into that cave, and as suddenly stopped. Where did it come from and where did it go?"

"I believe it came up out of that hole away down below the entrance to the cave, and as it swept up and into the cave the suction it created pulled everything close enough to the entrance in with it," said Ben.

"Then there must be an opening higher up on the mountain which serves as a blowout for the air, which comes in, probably, from another cavern at some distance away," said Ted. "The wind that I felt did not seem to flow from the outside, and I am inclined to think that Ben's theory is correct. We must try to find the blowout. It may be the only means to get into the place with safety."

"Let us get into the hills and find it, then," suggested Kit Summers. "I want to see what has become of the Spaniard."

The boys were standing near the mouth of the cave when this was said. Suddenly they heard the roaring noise that had presaged the rush of wind when the Spaniard disappeared, but it had a different roar, more terrible and awe-inspiring than before.

Before the boys could run they felt a terrible outburst of wind.

Instead of being a suction this time it was a blow-out. It came out of the cave opening as through a vast trumpet, making a noise like a gigantic fog horn.

The wind brought with it all sorts of debris, and an assortment of smells that were horrible.

"What's that?" shouted Bud Morgan. He was pointing to the cave entrance. Before any one had half a chance to look, something bulky shot across the chasm and landed at the feet of the boys, rolled over two or three times, then rose up and set out at a run. A man had been shot out of the cave.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"HUNGRY?" "YES, SIAM." "ALL RIGHT, I'LL FIJI."

Two British sailors went into a restaurant in Salonica and asked for Turkey in Greece. The waiter said: "I'm sorry, gentlemen, but I can't Serbia." Whereupon the Tommies shouted: "Fetch the Bosphorous!" When the manager arrived he said: "I'm sorry, gentlemen: I don't want to Russia, but you can't Roumania." And so the Tommies went away Hungry.



# THE NEWS OF THE WORLD.

## Canada Provides Money for Homes.

The housing shortage of Montreal is to be overcome by governmental aid. According to reports received by the United States department of labor, a fund of between four million and five million dollars will be available, and the administrative commission of the city of Montreal has been working on a plan by which it may be used most effectively. This plan contemplates the appointing of five public-spirited citizens who shall have charge of all housing projects. A manager will be appointed under whom plans and specifications will be prepared.

When a workman makes a request for money with which to build a home, he will have a choice of plans, provided he has not already chosen a special style of structure. After the required amount of money has been lent, the building will be inspected from time to time, so that assurance may be obtained that the specifications on which the loan was made are being carried out. The worker has the privilege of building the house himself, or he may contract for the construction.

The commission intends to give preference to labor in making the loans, but a certain amount will be at the disposal of contractors willing to undertake the building of houses for workers. Loans will be made for a period of twenty years at five and one-quarter per cent. The borrower, however, may provide for a sinking fund at a charge of seven per cent.

In this connection it is of interest that the workers classified as eligible to preference in the loans are defined by the commission as "all low-salaried men, and not necessarily men who work with pick and shovel."

## British Domestic Innovation.

The latest domestic experiment to be tried out in England, and one pointedly illustrating the trend toward radical social changes brought about by the war, is the recent establishment of a "household service corps," organized under government committees for the purpose of overcoming the reluctance felt by thousands of women who have been doing war work to return to domestic service.

The findings of one of these committees, which, on behalf of the government, are trying to solve the servant problem in that country, show that the loss of social status, long hours of work, and lack of companionship constitute three principal reasons why English girls are fighting shy of household work, now that they have had a taste of the greater freedom of factory and shop. The requirement that they shall wear a distinctive dress marking them out as a class apart also contributes to the prejudice against this form of employment, as does also the differentiation in the quality of food served for the dining room and the kitchen. The generally followed custom of addressing this class of workers by their Christian names or surnames and the consequent adoption of a superior attitude on the part of other workers, is

given as another cause of the prevalent dissatisfaction.

The recently organized corps is to be known as the Woman's Legion, and the proposal which has been made that its members be called Legionaries has apparently met with the approval of both employers and household workers. The fact that a Legionary badge will be worn, together with service stripes, will serve, it is thought, to raise this class of workers to the social level of other war workers wearing the same insignia.

Undoubtedly domestic service employees strongly desire to cut loose from all the time-honored marks of servitude. Though social distinctions in England have always been strictly drawn, the fact that large numbers of women formerly sustaining the relative positions of mistress and maid have been for four years working side by side in munition plants has had the effect of bridging in large measure the existing social chasm.

## Policeman's Horse Guards Door.

Piedmont, the saddle horse of Policeman William Lenihan, appeared in Jefferson Market Court, New York City recently, with a prisoner, John Ganey. Ganey, a young negro, looked sheepish. Lenihan told how earlier in the morning riding down Thirty-fifth Street he heard Mrs. Hazleton scream from the window of her apartment at No. 350 West Thirty-fifth Street. She had stumbled over a kit of burglar's tools. Ganey ran from the door and Lenihan, with Piedmont under him, gave chase. Ganey ran into a saloon at Thirty-eighth Street and Eighth Avenue. Lenihan dismounted and followed.

"Piedmont would not let any one in or out of the place and remained on post at the door until I had captured Ganey," said the policeman. "Piedmont is only a horse, but he's some cop."

Magistrate Groehl said he would be pleased to meet Piedmont. He also said Ganey would have to furnish two thousand dollars or stay in jail until his examination Monday on a charge of burglary.

## She Slept for Forty-seven Days and Nights.

After sleeping forty-seven days—and nights—Matilda Blount, colored, who "sleeps" at No. 1018 West Thirty-seventh Street, Savannah, Ga., has awakened from her extended slumbers, very much alive and with a number of miraculous tales to tell.

During her peaceful rest Matilda baffled Savannah physicians by giving them a fair example of sound slumber.

The negress is now baffling her many listeners, telling them what she saw while in a state of subconsciousness. St. Peter and she are on speaking acquaintance, and the great white way is no longer a mystery to her. She does not offer any explanation of the darker regions, but has made the heavenly sphere as clear to Savannah's darktown as Pittsburgh.



The negress was a peculiar case. She could be stood on her head, placed in any position, stuck with a knife, pinched or kicked, while asleep and it would never disturb her. She was fed artificially, and had a trained nurse attendant to study the case.

#### Two Commodities Rise After War Ends.

The only two articles of food in a list of two hundred that were cheaper in 1918 than in 1913 have advanced since the signing of the armistice. This fact was brought out recently in a comparison of prices made from records of the bureau of labor statistics, United States department of labor. The two food commodities are onions and coffee—Rio No. 7—and both are now quoted at prices fifty per cent higher than the prewar standards.

#### Owens an Old Goose.

Peter A. Metz, of near Creamery, Pa., is the owner of a goose that is twenty-nine years old and has a record of laying eight eggs during the year. The last egg she laid measured eight and three-quarters by eleven and three-quarter inches in circumference. The goose is in a mournful tune, for some time ago death robbed her of her life partner, "Pete," the gander. A dog snuffed out the life of Pete.

#### Aged Trapper is Attacked by Coon.

M. Kinzie, seventy-four years old, who resides with his son, Frank, near the Missouri River, South Dakota, started out one morning recently to look at his traps, and at a certain point in the bluff he observed a freshly dug hole. Dropping on his knees he proceeded to investigate, whereupon a large coon ferociously attacked him, fastening his teeth in Kinzie's left hand.

He fought the animal as best he could, and finally succeeded in getting his knife out of his pocket with his right hand; opening the blade with his teeth he made an effort to cut the coon's throat, but the beast had so badly lacerated his arm and hand that it was almost impossible for the aged man to subdue him. Finally he succeeded in cutting the coon's windpipe, but not until the ferocious animal had torn the flesh from his hand and arm and completely threaded his coat sleeve up to the shoulder.

#### Bankers Rivet Hog Island Ships.

One hundred bank officials of Philadelphia and New York drove rivets and crawled along propeller shafts while on an inspection trip at Hog Island. Following their working stunts, the bankers witnessed the launching of the cargo carrier "Scantic," the twenty-fifth vessel built at the shipyard. The sponsor was Mrs. L. A. Trumbell, wife of the superintendent of machinery installation and outfitting.

#### Recluse Wealthy.

With one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars in gold on his person, together with several bank books, which showed his total wealth at approximately five thousand dollars, Samuel Baker, seventy-six years old, a recluse, who has lived in a cabin on the outskirts of Wilmington, Del., nearly a quarter of a century,

was taken into custody recently on the charge of trespassing.

Despite his advanced age, Baker several days before put up a fight when Constables Whitting and Jones made an attempt to arrest him. He chased the two officers from the cabin at the point of a shotgun. State Detective McCoy managed to get Baker to accompany him to the police station after he had fully explained his mission.

#### Wounded Make Toys.

An exhibit of articles made by wounded soldiers at Fort Riley, Kan., in the course of their occupational work was given at educational service headquarters. It included wood carvings, weaving, and useful articles in leather. Many of the men have turned their attention to toys, and in one ward at Section K the boys turned out an entire miniature circus parade. The occupational work is regarded as of great value in effecting quick recovery.

#### Tramp Dog Shuns Home Life.

For some time a homeless black dog has lounged along Clifton Boulevard, near West One Hundred and Eighth Street, Cleveland, Ohio. He refuses to be adopted by kind-hearted women and children. Jack is always good-natured and unusually friendly with children.

He expresses his gratitude for attention shown him by wagging his tail. Rain or shine, Jack takes his position at some street corner along the boulevard, every morning, and seemingly takes a delight in seeing the passing throng going cityward.

#### Dog's Hair Utilized.

Now comes the information that a dog's wool association has been formed—an organization to promote the production and quality of the fleece of dogs for industrial purposes. But, to have been strictly correct, it ought to have been called a dog's hair association, and not a dog's wool association. There is a vast difference between hair and wool.

It is stated that the hair of such dogs as the spaniel and Pekingese pets, especially, is commercially valuable, and that when mixed with wool produces a splendid fabric. There is no reason to doubt it. But in the matter of weaving, there isn't anything else so good as wool. This is because wool is a jointed affair, having little ribs or rolls or enlargements all along its length. When wool is twisted together these little ridges hold together and prevent the strands from slipping, while when hairs are woven together they readily slip.

#### Watch Stops Bullet.

A watch, on the crystal of which was the photograph of the girl two men fought over, in Louisville, Ky., saved the life of Julius Schildnecht. The bullet fired struck the watch, entered the steel works and was deflected to his hip.

Though the two men fought over a girl, each said that he did not know her first name. The fight occurred at Floyd and Jefferson Streets. Schildnecht is at the City Hospital, suffering with a shattered right



hip. M. J. Hayes, the other man, is at the county jail, charged with malicious shooting. Both said the girl was a Miss McGuire.

#### Indian Prayer.

Daniel Carter Beard, the National Scout Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America, is in thorough sympathy with the Indian method of teaching the young a respect for birds, animals, and plants, amounting even to an affection for the same.

The Indian mother would begin with her boy papoose and say, "Behold thy brothers the trees, thy sisters the flowers." This was continued up through boyhood, and it made the relationship of the boy with the natural objects around him a component part of his education.

So Mr. Beard has written for the boys of his outdoor school in particular and the Boy Scouts of America in general an invocation to be used at the council fire ceremony.

#### The Indian Invocation.

O Great Mystery, we beseech thee  
That we may walk reverently  
Beneath Lah'-pah and our brothers the trees;  
That we may step lightly  
On Kis'-soo, our kinsmen the grasses;  
That we may walk deferently  
Over Loo'-poo-oi'-yes, our brothers the rocks;  
That we may rest trustfully  
Where the o-lel'-le bird sings  
Beside Ho-ha'-pe, the talking waters.

The National Scout Commissioner also has written a prayer for wisdom to be used on ceremonial council fire occasions.

#### The Indian Prayer.

Weave for us, O Great Mystery,  
A bright blanket of wisdom,  
Make the warp the color of Father Sky;  
Let He'-koo-las, the sun-woman,  
Lend her bright hair for the weft,  
And mingle with it the red and gold threads of evening.  
O Great Mystery! O Mother Earth! O Father Sky!  
We, your children, love the things you love;  
Therefore let the border of our blanket  
Be bending Ku-yet'-tah, the rainbow,  
And the fringe be glittering Nuk'-kah, the driving rain.

#### How a Government Bureau Reformed an Alcoholic.

Jake Bochenski found that his little habit of getting drunk frequently and beating up his wife when in that exhilarated condition interfered with his genuine desire to become a citizen of this country. At first he was puzzled. In his native Poland nobody—but his wife perhaps—had taken the matter very seriously. In the United States of America, which he had been told was the land of the free, the government butted in. He couldn't understand it.

As soon after his arrival in this country as the law allowed Jake Bochenski took out his first naturalization papers. In 1907, when his petition for naturalization was heard, it was dismissed because of the

bad moral character, which meant the habitual drunkenness of the petitioner. At first Jake couldn't believe that any one could take his personal habits so seriously. Promptly in 1909, two years later, he again applied for citizenship. Again his petition was dismissed for the same reason as before. Doggedly he waited. It never occurred to him, of course, to change his habits; in fact, his sprees were a little more frequent because of his sense of injury to his patriotic emotion. This brought Jake Bochenski to the date of 1911, when he again made another petition to become a citizen. This time the case was dismissed for non-prosecution, while the true reason was that Jake still continued to get drunk and beat up his wife.

At that time a certain naturalization examiner had charge of Jake's district. When the examiner became acquainted with Bochenski's extensive court experience and the reasons for it, he decided that it was time for a change if the Pole should try again. In 1912, when Jake's biennial craving for American citizenship began to show signs of manifesting itself, the examiner reasoned with him in big-brotherly fashion, "See here, Jake, the judge has dismissed your case three times already because you get drunk and beat up your wife. He is not apt to admit you unless you change. If you insist on having your petition heard now, before you become a good man, it will only make your record worse. But if you do what I say I'll help you to please the judge so he will let you in."

"What's that?" asked Jake.

"Stop drinking. Get your wife to come to me every three months and report about your behavior. If you keep sober and treat her well for two years I'll tell the judge about it. I'm pretty sure if he knows you've turned over a new leaf he'll admit you. If you don't do this I don't believe there's a chance in the world of your being admitted."

Jake considered.

"I'll send my wife t'ree mont'," he said briefly.

Every three months Jake's wife, looking a little happier and healthier each time, reported "Jake he don't drink yet." Seven times three months and the little woman had become fairly chubby. Eight times three months and the case came up for trial. This time he was admitted. The naturalization examiner smiled all over, and the judge smiled, too. Jake smiled more broadly than any one else, but the little woman cried for joy when the judge ruled that her husband be admitted to citizenship. Nobody would have known Jake was the same man as the one who had last appeared there. One of the witnesses to his good moral character was his brother-in-law, who nine years before had had him arrested for beating the little woman who was now so happy.

The judge, who had entered into the kindly conspiracy to secure the man's regeneration, directed him to report at the end of six months so they might be assured that he was not backsliding; and then again at the end of another six months. Both judge and examiner awaited his appearance with much suspense. But they need not have feared; Jake was a new man, and a new man he has remained ever since.

Soon after Bochenski became a citizen the Polish-American Club of his city elected the naturalization examiner an honorary member, an honor he prizes



much. The Polish-American Club of that city has two thousand members. Every member who is not already a citizen has made his declaration. Bochenski's case has made them believe in Americanism.

#### Denver Girls Kick Way Out of Jail.

Two Denver girls, giving their names as Loretta Smith and Helen Starr, each eighteen years old, who were arrested at a rooming house, in Greeley, Colo., did not like confinement in the city jail, and kicked their way to liberty.

The door to the woman's department, where they were confined, was wood, and one of the panels was kicked out. The girls then got chairs and opened a high window which was not grated and escaped.

#### Her Fourth Husband Is Named Fourthman.

George Fourthman, who in spite of having turned his seventieth milestone is still employed in a shop in Waynesboro, Pa., had been a widower for several years. He recently concluded that to break the monotony of his lonely life it might be well to look around for another mate.

Among the many whom Mr. Fourthman considered was Mrs. Martha Ankerbrand, of Greenvillage, aged sixty, and the relict of three departed husbands. It was a case of love at first sight. And so they were married, Mr. Fourthman being her fourth husband.

#### Two Indians Defy Capture.

Two heavily armed Navaho Indians, said to be the confessed slayers of Charles Hubbell, brother of former State Senator Lorenzo Hubbell, whose body was found in the ruins of his trading post, forty-five miles south of Winslow, Ariz., March 23d, are standing at bay in a mountain cave ninety miles north of Winslow, in one of the wildest sections of the State, prepared to fight till death.

#### War Record of English Women Unexcelled.

That the women of Great Britain undoubtedly played a most important part in industry during the war is the opinion expressed by the employers' industrial commission of the department of labor in a report made public upon its return to Washington on March 27th. The commission sailed for England early in February, having been designated by Secretary Wilson to study labor conditions there, and to report on the attitude of employers and employees toward problems of industrial unrest.

A brief survey of conditions as they affected women in industry disclosed that there had been decided opposition on the part of the men to the wholesale employment of women in shops and factories at the beginning of the war. Later, however, this opposition seemed to have been partly overcome by the general adoption of a plan whereby the women relatives of the men were invited to work in the various plants.

It appears, from observations made by the commission, that many people in Great Britain believe that the returning soldiers whose jobs have been taken over by women should not be kept permanently out of their positions. Consequently it is generally taken for granted that hundreds of thousands of women will

return to their own homes, or go into domestic service again, when demobilization shall have progressed far enough to warrant it. "However," says the report, "some of the leaders themselves, and especially labor men who are now working for the government, call attention to the fact that equal pay for equal work should properly mean equal pay for equal value; that, therefore, women need not draw the same pay per hour as men, as otherwise women when not capable of delivering equal value would be crowded out of employment."

#### Army Nurses Want to Get on Farms.

Nurses, fatigued from service in France, are appealing for the opportunity to get into farm work this summer. One army nurse, who has spent many arduous months behind the lines, has applied to the United States employment service, through the woman's land army, for direction to preliminary agricultural training in farm units. She says that she has taken up a tract of land in Wyoming, but wants up-to-date training before she starts to work her ranch.

Teachers and librarians make up a large number of applicants for work at the seasonal agricultural trades which are the specialty of this branch of the service. Arrangements are already made with the fruit growers in sections where local labor is not available for fruit-picking units during the coming season.

No attempt is being made to place women in work which returning soldiers might want to undertake. The difference between their physical strength and the women's make the line very easy to draw, the field officers of the land army declare.

#### Two Hundred and Seventy-eight Royal Personages Exiled by German Upheavals.

A German professor figures out that the abdications and dethronements in Germany include two hundred and seventy-eight persons. Bavaria leads with one king, one queen, fifteen princes, sixteen princesses, five dukes, and one duchess. Prussia has sent thirty-three royalties into exile, including the emperor, empress, twenty princes, and eleven princesses. Brunswick is at the bottom of the list, with only the ducal couple and their three children. The two tiny principalities of Reuss, whose area is hardly one-third-hundredth part that of Prussia, have exiled thirty-six royalties.

#### Respect for Flag.

Already there is a marked decrease in the respect due to the American flag since the armistice, according to an appeal issued recently by the American Defense Society, and in an endeavor to correct this let-down in the public attitude toward the national emblem there is to be inaugurated a nationwide campaign for the proper deference and reverence which the Stars and Stripes should inspire.

The society is pledged to make a drive in the schools of the country to teach the youth of the land the history of the flag. These purposes will be first put into effect through the three hundred branches of the society and with the coöperation of the hundreds of other patriotic and civic organizations.



Attention is drawn by the society to the need of replacing torn, dirty, or otherwise neglected flags by new emblems. Especially is this essential if the patriotism of the foreign born of America's citizenry is to be conserved.

"The flag should be regarded with a deep feeling of respect," says the appeal, "and every American and foreign born child should be taught its glorious history, as this will make them realize what it means to be an American. They will also learn that the flag stands for 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people,' not only for this day and hour but for all the days while the children of men may live and love liberty."

Prominent among the organizations which have promised their coöperation with the American Defense Society in the work is the Boy Scouts of America. It is the purpose of the organizations united in this campaign that the same care of the flag shown by men of the army and navy be exhibited by all civilians. In the army and navy ceremonies are observed in the raising and lowering of the flag. Never is it allowed under any instances to touch the ground or the deck of a ship, and care is always taken that only clean flags are flown.

#### Repatriating Sixty Thousand Greeks.

Repatriation of nearly sixty thousand Greeks who were removed from their homes during the war by the Bulgars has been practically completed. Reports received to-day at American Red Cross headquarters here said the Bulgars tried in every way possible to impede the repatriation work and endeavored to conceal the fact that thousands of the Greeks had died during their internment from starvation and exposure.

#### Colleges to Teach Safety.

Officials of the working conditions service, department of labor, and members of the national safety council are working out an educational program designed to bring safety instruction into engineering courses in colleges.

It is the belief of safety experts that by bringing safety methods to the attention of men who will later occupy executive or technical positions in mining and engineering enterprises, a considerable reduction in industrial accidents will be made possible. Because engineering courses are already so well filled it will be the practice to introduce safety work in subjects already being taught rather than to establish special courses in safety engineering.

#### Loses Home by Mistaken Legal Advice.

The unfortunate position of Mrs. Emma Barbara Ritzler Dittrich, of No. 158 East One Hundred and Eighty-first Street, New York City, "due to mistaken legal advice given to her and her late husband," the referee says, by Attorney Samuel Fruchthandler, who now has the right to call himself Franklin, is revealed in a report filed in the surrogate's office recently.

Sixty years old, with an eleven-year-old son to support, Mrs. Dittrich finds herself confronted with a judgment against her of about two thousand six hundred dollars, obtained in the foreclosure of a mortgage

on No. 875 East End Avenue, which her husband, Doctor Dittrich, now dead, bought in 1905.

Doctor Dittrich gave in part payment a second mortgage for two thousand five hundred dollars, secured by his bond. Several years later he sold it. Attorney Fruchthandler—now Franklin—according to the report of Referee E. L. Winthrop, advised that no further action about the bond need be taken.

When Doctor Dittrich died in 1912 his widow did not advertise for creditors. This was also on her counsel's advice. The next year one Epstein, holder of the bond, had the mortgage foreclosed, the property sold, and obtained a deficiency judgment against Mrs. Dittrich. He later transferred his claim to Alfred M. Weil, who is now pressing it.

Doctor Dittrich left only about six thousand dollars. His widow has spent this.

#### England to Expand Training.

England will not only continue its industrial training but will expand factory training processes during peace time, the training service, department of labor, announces to-day. Information received from England shows that that country intends to embark in a great campaign for foreign trade and that, owing to the industrial conditions there, factory owners have decided that thorough training of workers is essential for effective competition in foreign markets.

Training service officials are urging American manufacturers to profit by British example, for the reason that in this country labor must be compensated at an even higher rate, both relatively and absolutely, than in England, and that in order to allow a fair return for themselves some means of increasing production is essential.

"Great Britain's industrial conditions most nearly approach those of the United States," declared Charles T. Clayton, director of the training service. "British workmen are paid larger wages than those on the Continent and British living standards more nearly resemble ours.

"To pay high wages and yet make a profit they must increase production without increasing unit costs, to enable them to undersell competitors. Germany had factory training long before any of the allied nations had taken it up on an important scale. The opinion among British experts is that factory training was as essential toward winning the war as the training of their armies, and that any real entrance in the field of foreign trade demands training of factory workmen on a national scale.

"What applies to England naturally applies with redoubled force to the United States, since labor's compensation is still larger here."

#### Illiteracy in South Causes Lawlessness.

Harmonious relations between whites and negroes in the South can readily be cultivated, is the conclusion of R. H. Leavell, of Mississippi, one of the investigators on negro migration in 1916-17, the report on which has just been issued through the office of the director of negro economics, department of labor. Mr. Leavell cites particularly, among the experiences of a number of communities, the case of Adams County, of which Natchez, Miss., is the county seat. The har-



mony existing there, he believes, is due to the close contact of the leaders of the two races.

"It is significant that in the older counties which line the eastern banks of the Mississippi from Tennessee to the Louisiana line, where relations between the races are fairly good, white adult male illiteracy is by counties from one-half to one-fifth what it is in the State as a whole; and that in two counties notorious for whitecapping and expelling negroes white adult male illiteracy is fifty per cent more than for the State as a whole," Mr. Leavell writes.

Relations are most cordial, he asserts, where white illiteracy is lowest, where communities have existed for generations and whites and blacks have long been in contact; where the soil is fertile; where right of trial in court is maintained for negroes and where negroes are encouraged to own property.

#### Time to Build Canals.

Canal construction, and the development of water powers, are no less important than the building of roads, public works, and necessary buildings during the reconstruction period, in the opinion of officials of the department of labor, who are urging internal development of the country in order to add to its permanent resources and to utilize the labor power that will be lost irrevocably if workmen are idle.

Should the government retain control of the railroads for the next five years, it is suggested, the development of a great canal system supplementing rail transportation will mean lower prices on a great many articles not of perishable character into the cost of which at present transportation enters heavily. Moreover, the canals will be able to relieve somewhat the excessive strains imposed on rail lines at certain times.

Germany developed inland transportation by canals to a great extent. Many authorities declare that the wise use of waterways will lead to the greatest economic changes of modern times.

Secretary Wilson, of the department of labor; Secretary Baker, of the war department; and Secretary Daniels, of the navy department, have declared strongly in favor of the development of American waterways.

#### Prince Forfeits Throne.

Inayatulla Khan, eldest son of the late Habibullah Khan, Amir of Afghanistan, who was assassinated on February 20th, it is learned, has agreed to the succession to the throne of Nesrullah Khan, brother of the late amir.

#### Volcanoes Ruin Plantations.

Nicaragua advices say the Volcano Santiago is in full eruption, intermittently throwing ashes and spreading fumes over a large area. The volcano is situated in the midst of a number of plantations, which are suffering from the eruption. The Volcano Irazu in Costa Rica also is active, and plantations are sustaining damage.

#### Live Fish in Mine Shaft Stream.

A mining company operating a mine at Quapaw, Okla., has developed something of a prodigy. A shaft was put down one hundred and sixty feet in solid rock where a stream of water containing numerous small fish was encountered.

These fish have all the appearances of the minnows found in streams which surround the mine district, and are not blind as underground fish usually are.

The mine is situated on a dry prairie where no surface water could possibly reach it from any of the streams, and it is a mystery to mining men how the fish could have found the way to their subterranean abode.

#### Twenty-eighth Term as Village Clerk.

Seth Youngs, aged eighty-six, has been reappointed village clerk of Dresden, N. Y. This makes his twenty-eighth term. In addition he has served as town clerk of Torrey the past decade; has been treasurer of the school district in which he lives for almost half a century, and for thirty-five years was district clerk.

Mr. Youngs was born in the eastern part of Long Island, a descendant of the Reverend John Youngs, who came from England in 1670 and settled on a six-hundred-and-forty-acre tract of land there. Mr. Youngs says that in his boyhood he hauled fish by the wagon load from the bay to use as fertilizer. Practically all the farmers on Long Island used fish in those days as fertilizer.

His father moved to Dresden about the year 1840.

#### Promote Industrial Harmony.

Harmonious relations between employer and employee through the most efficient and satisfactory processes of labor management are of the greatest importance to industry, in the opinion of officials of the working conditions service, department of labor, who have worked out a program of work designed to lead to the maintenance of coöperation between employer and employee.

Studies of employment systems and labor management policies are being made. The working conditions service give information of methods of hiring employees and assigning them to work in order to avoid labor turnover are under consideration.

Industrial managers are assisting employers in studying their individual problems and advising as to the best methods of hiring and selecting employees, reducing absenteeism, and stimulating morale among the workmen.

A national information center on employment and labor administration is being established for the use of industrial managers educational institutions, and others. Policies of labor administration are being developed and promulgated. The service is acting as counselor or consultant in industrial disputes and assisting industries to put into operation policies recommended.

Plants are being helped to get trained men as labor administrators.

#### Broke Wooden Leg.

"I've broken my leg," yelled Jasper Poltis, as he fell to the street, in Columbus, Ohio. Two cops saw Poltis fall and heard his cries. They called the police ambulance and hustled him to his home. All the way the man with the broken leg talked with the officers. "Funny how a man with a broken leg can be so jolly," remarked one of the cops. "It was my wooden leg," said Poltis.